

FOUR Extra Pages Inside, Lads, PLUS News Of Big Treats Ahead!

EVERY TUESDAY 3^o

Adventure

No. 1779—FEB. 21st, 1959.

RYAN OF THE REDCOATS



1—"Our plan is simple, but I will explain it clearly so that all will understand." The speaker was the most feared Indian in all of Canada at that time—Chief Little Crow of the Chewaka tribe. His hundred-strong band of rebels crowded closer to hear how they were to attack the Coulee River Dam, which stood only a few hundred yards from their hiding-place amongst some rocks and bushes. "We will attack from two directions," Little Crow went on, "and take the engineers by surprise!"



2—The rebel leader split his gang into two parties. The larger force he sent upstream along the dam's shore. It was led by Hunting Bear, one of the few young braves that Little Crow trusted. Little Crow, himself, led about forty warriors down the hillside towards the dam-top. Two engineers were working on part of the winding gear that opened one of the sluice gates in the dam,

but they neither saw nor heard anything suspicious as the Chewakas crawled closer to the end of the dam. When Little Crow decided that Hunting Bear was in position he let out a blood-curdling war-whoop. The engineers wheeled round, saw the danger, then fled for their lives. They reached the safety of their hut just as the Chewakas opened fire. (Continued on back page.)

A spectator's umbrella turns Harry Vale's brilliant recovery shot into a failure.



GOLF IN THE RAIN.

RAIN was coming down in sheets as Harry Vale walked towards the eighteenth tee on the Calverton course.

Harry had been assistant professional at the Thatchford and County Golf Club for nearly a year.

He was playing in a competition for Central Counties professionals, which included assistants, arranged by the "Midland Daily News." The first prize was a cup and fifty pounds.

The competition was over 36 holes medal play—which meant that the winner would be the player who returned the lowest total for the two rounds.

The morning had been fine. Indeed, it had only been raining hard for about an hour, so that the early starters had an advantage.

Calverton was a long course and par was 74. Harry had played a steady game in the first round, and when coming up to the eighteenth had played 70 strokes.

Boxey—the score which should be taken by a scratch player under average conditions—was four, and he would have been satisfied with this figure. However, the youngster had hit the green with his second shot, then dropped a long putt for a three.

This had given Harry a score of 73 and placed him in the lead with Jack Archway, his own professional, and Ike Wright, the Calverton assistant.

As it happened Harry was paired with Wright, a tall, broad-shouldered fellow who had been grumbling ever since

it started to rain, and who squelched along under a red umbrella.

The golfers were accompanied by their caddies and the marker, Mr Warren.

Harry and Wright were still going neck and neck, and despite the rain, came to the eighteenth tee for the second time that day with scores of 70.

It was an early autumn day in the nineteenth thirtees.

Harry looked as if he had walked through a river, for he did not carry an umbrella. He belonged to the country, and his father was a farm hand. Harry had still to celebrate his eighteenth birthday.

Despite the rain, a golf fan in dripping oilskins had reached the tee with news from the clubhouse.

"How are you doing?" he demanded.

"We're both two over fours," Harry exclaimed.

"Then either of you can win," answered the enthusiast, "You can win with a four."

"Some hopes on a day like this," growled Ike Wright.

Gawking at a towel out of his bag, he rubbed his hands while still sheltered by the umbrella.

Finally he pulled his driver out of his bag and handed the game to his caddie.

A strong cross wind was blowing from right to left. On the left, on the other side of a strip of rough, was a wire fence and a road.

Wright teed up his ball and shuffled into his stance.

In spite of his growling, Wright hit a screamer down the middle of the fairway.

Harry, who had not brought a towel, wiped his hands under the armpits of his jersey. He

teed up the ball then took his driver.

He stepped into position and waggled the club head over the ball before grounding it. Stiffness, which meant tension, was bad for golf.

Harry swung the club in a wide arc, then brought it lashing down at the ball.

He hit his worst drive of the day.

The ball went streaking away to the left, for he had hooked it.

Through the rain and the mist, Harry saw his ball land on the edge of the fairway and skip on towards the fence.

"Bad luck," muttered Wright from under his gamp. "You've gone out of bounds."

"I'm not sure," replied Harry grimly. "The soft ground may have pulled it up."

The caddies were not sure, and Mr Warren was shortsighted, anyway.

"Are you going to play a provisional ball, Vale?" Mr Warren asked.

"I suppose I'd better," nodded Harry.

Under the rules, if it were considered that a ball might be out of bounds, a provisional second ball could be played. If the hole were completed with the provisional ball, however, a penalty stroke was added to the score.

BUNKERED BY BROLLY.

HARRY'S second drive was a beauty, a sizzler down the middle of the fairway. If only he could have done it first time.

With water squelching in his shoes, Harry left the tee. Followed by his caddie, a youth called Ern, he headed

for the spot where he had last seen his original ball.

He almost ran in his eagerness to find if it had gone through the fence or not.

People were watching from the veranda of the clubhouse. A few, with umbrellas, stood round the green.

Ern, breathless from hurrying along with the bag, pointed to a little muddy hole in the turf at the edge of the fairway.

"This is where it dropped," he panted.

Thanks to being on the line of flight, Harry spotted the ball lying between two grassy tussocks close to the fence.

Harry shouted that he had found the ball. That meant Mr Warren could pick up the provisional ball when he reached it.

Harry pondered over which club to use. He was a long way from the green, and now had to play through the wind to reach it.

"I'll take my three iron," Harry growled. "If I hit it right, it'll go."

When Harry took his stance he found he could just take the club back without fouling the fence. Meanwhile Wright had played his second shot and was somewhere in front of the green.

Harry wriggled about till he had a solid footing among the tussocks. He carried the club back and really got his wrists snapping into it as he lashed down and struck the ball.

As his head came up, he saw the ball soaring towards the green.

"Fore!" he yelled suddenly as he saw that a spectator with a yellow umbrella, possibly thinking he was out of range, had wandered into the line of flight

near the side of the green.

Other people shouted at the spectator, an elderly man with a drooping moustache, who waddled about like a startled duck in an attempt to get out of the way.

The ball dropped on to the umbrella and bounced off it into a bunker at the side of the green.

"See that?" Ern yelled. "He ought to 'ave his silly head cut off!"

If a ball in motion were stopped or deflected by any agency outside the match, the ball had to be played from the spot where it lay.

"I reckon you're deep in the sand," shouted Ern.

"I'll have to get it out, then," growled Harry as he walked out of the rough and on towards the green.

"I'm so sorry," spluttered the culprit as Harry approached. "You hit a wonderful shot and I quite lost sight of the ball."

"It's all right, sir," Harry shrugged. "It couldn't be helped."

NEWS FOR HARRY.

THE youngster discovered that the ball was half-way up the bunker, and lay half-buried in the wet sand.

He waited for Wright, who was farther away from the pin, to play his approach shot. The ball was five or six feet from the edge of the green.

There were slopes in the green which made it tricky. Wright was not quite strong enough with his chip, and the ball rolled off the line, stopping about four feet from the hole.

Harry took his number eight iron from Ern and went into the bunker. The club he was going to use had a pronounced loft.

By the rules, a club might not be grounded in a bunker before playing the shot.

Even though the rain was hissing down, Harry did not rush things. The first thing he did was to establish a firm foothold. A golfer who sank in the sand at the moment he hit at the ball was liable to miss it altogether.

He took a long look at the ball, pushed the club back, then hit down and forced the clubhead through. Sand spurted up and his head had not moved long after the ball had gone.

Hearing applause, the young golfer looked out of the bunker. His ball was about a foot farther from the hole than Wright's.

"What are they clapping for?" grunted Harry. "I should've put it a darned sight closer."

Taking his putter, Harry walked across the green towards the ball, summing-up the line for the putt as he did so.

Because of the slope of the green, it was not a straight putt. He decided he must hit the ball a little to the right of the hole. The moisture on the

grass was going to slow it down.

"Take the pin out," he rapped and Ern lifted the flag.

Harry tapped the ball along the line he wished it to follow and it left a trail on the wet grass as it ran. It turned towards the hole and plopped into the can to give him his hard-earned four and an total of 147 for the day.

The applause was hushed for Wright to take his putt. Harry's opponent over-estimated the braking effect of the damp grass, and his ball pulled up a couple of inches short of the hole.

"Bad luck," sympathised Harry.

Harry got cold waiting for you," frowned Wright.

In this way Harry won the first prize. Fifty pounds as seemed like small fortune to him.

As he left the green, soaked though, but happy, his gaze was attracted by a bright bow tie worn by a spectator on the veranda.

George P. Haxton, of Philadelphia, an American businessman who admitted that he was crazy on golf, was paying another visit to Britain.

Harry had caddied for Haxton the first time he played at Thatchford, and the American had been there several times since.

"Good for you, son," he beamed at Harry. "You must have shot some grand golf today. I want to talk to you as soon as you've put on some dry clothes."

SNOB GOLFS.

JACK ARCHWAY, a dour man in his forties, cast an inquiring glance at Harry as they settled down in his car for the drive back to Thatchford.

The professional had fifteen pounds in his pocket as his share of the second prize.

"I saw you talking to Mister Haxton," Archway remarked gruffly. "What did he have to say?"

He wants me to play with him in the Fairfax Goblet competition," Harry answered.

Archway raised his eyebrows. In the Fairfax Goblet competition, played annually on the famous and exclusive Petersbury course, an amateur and professional formed a partnership.

The competition was played as a foursome. This meant that partners hit the ball alternately.

It was match play, of course. The winners of a match played the loser in the next round. The entry was by invitation and Mr Haxton had clearly been asked as he was an influential figure in American golf.

"What did you say?" Archway asked.

"I told him I'd ask you," Harry said tactfully. "If he happened to get through the first two rounds, it'd mean staying away a couple of days." "It's a chance for you," replied Archway. "I shan't stand in your way."

Ten days later, at about

entrance," snapped the major domo. "Professionals enter by the door at the side of the house."

Harry slipped the strap back over a shoulder and walked out. He made his way round to the wing of the building and found a doorway marked "Professionals."

In a big locker room, several professionals were talking as they changed. Harry recognised Steve Fuller, Owen Dare, and one or two others, though they certainly did not recognise him.

An attendant with a spiked moustache and a green baize apron frowned at him. "Caddies are not allowed in here until called for," he rapped.

"Have another guess," Harry retorted. "I'm having a game."

Owen Dare, whose plus fours were well torn, frowned at the young golfer.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Harry Vale!" Burly Abe Matson, a former Open Champion, looked at a list on the noticeboard.

"It's all right, Owen," he grunted. "He's Mister Haxton's partner."

"What's golf coming to?" Dare observed, and turned away.

Harry was, in fact, the only assistant to be taking part. He took a look at the list for himself and saw:-

10.0 a.m.—Mr George P. Haxton (Philadelphia) and H. Vale (Thatchford, assistant) v. Sir Humphrey Rafford (Royal Langholm) and O. Dare (Royal Langholm).

"Crikey, am I having a game with him?" muttered Harry, with another look at Dare's plus fours.

Harry went up to the attendant.

"Is there anywhere to get a bite?" he asked.

"Breakfast isn't provided for the professionals," was the cold answer.

"All right, I'll cater for myself," retorted Harry.

He hurried away from the house, passing the windows of a dining-room where two waiters in white jackets were serving breakfasts to members and guests, and headed for the village, quarter of a mile away.

At the village shop, Harry bought one of yesterday's small loaves, some margarine and a hunk of cheese. He sat on a gate between the village and the club, saved up the loaf with his knife and ate the lot.

When he returned to the clubhouse, the professionals had arrived and were changing.

Harry put on his golfing trousers, which had become creased in the bag, a brown jersey and his shoes. He was ready.

Carrying his bag, Harry made his way on to the course to hire a caddie.

The caddie master, who looked like an ex-policeman, sat in a hut about twice the size of a sentry box.

"Who are you 'carrying for?' he asked gruffly, for some of the players brought caddies with them.

"I want 'em carried, guv'nor," grinned Harry. "I'm playing."

When convinced that Harry was indeed taking part in the competition, the caddie-master found him a wiry, bow-legged man named Hancox to carry his clubs.

Hancox looked annoyed at having to go out as caddie to an unknown young player.

There were some surprised looks when Mr. Haxton appeared on the scene wearing green cap and jerkin, yellow plus fours and green stockings.

WATER SHOT.

UNDER the rules of the competition, the amateurs received their handicap strokes. Both Sir Humphrey and the American played off six.

At ten o'clock the starter called their names, and they moved to the first tee.

The first hole was a bogey four. The fairway was pretty wide, but there was heather on either side. To the left of the green was a pool fringed by reeds.

"Will you drive, Dare?" asked Sir Humphrey Rafford.

"Yes, sir," replied Dare. The professional hit a long, true drive that gained an appreciative nod and chuckle from his partner. With the aid of a slight down-slope the ball travelled 270 yards or so.

Harry set his ball on a wooden tee peg and took his driver from Hancox. He settled into his stance, swept the club back, winding himself up like a spring, and lashed into the ball.

"Gee whizz!" gasped Mr. Haxton, as he watched the ball streaking away.

Dare shot an astonished glance at Harry, for the youngster's ball had passed his by a good many yards.

"Well done, Harry!" exclaimed his partner. "I should be able to hit the green with my seven iron."

Down the fairway they walked. Sir Humphrey reaching his side's ball and stood looking at the green. He asked his caddie for his six iron.

Harry had his doubts about Sir Humphrey's choice. It was the club he would have used himself, but he was pretty sure his opponent would not make the green with a six iron.

Sir Humphrey's shot was straight, but he had under-clubbed, and the ball finished outside the green. He looked peeved about it, while Dare preserved a polite expression. They walked on to Harry's ball. It was so much nearer the

green that Harry reckoned Mr. Haxton was about right when he took his seven iron.

This club, with its loft, would put the ball high in the air and enable it to pull up quickly with back-swing. The American struck down at the ball, then squawked with alarm. He had pulled it to the left and it soared towards the pool.

Mr. Haxton turned apologetically to his partner.

"I'm sorry, Harry," he spluttered. "That was a darn fool thing to do!"

"Don't let's apologise for our poor shots," Harry advised. "They're all part of the game."

Let's take 'em as they come." "Okay, okay," nodded Mr. Haxton, pleased at the suggestion. "We'll save our breath."

Harry fetched his eight iron, a well-lofted club, from the bag and strode towards the ball. It lay within six inches of the water. It was miry, but the rules stated that it could not be picked up and cleaned.

Without a moment's hesitation, Harry took off his shoes and socks, rolled up his trousers and stepped into the water to take his stance.

It was an uphill shot. He could only see the top of the flag pin above the bunkers.

Harry took a sight on the pin, looked hard at the ball and struck down. It soared high, cleared the sand traps and dropped out of sight.

For the first time Hancox lost his gloomy air.

"You're pin high," the caddie yelled out, meaning that the ball was level with the pin. "Ain't a long putt, neither!" Mr. Haxton sank the putt and, since their opponents took three more shots to hole out he and Harry were one up.

FROZEN DUCK VICTORY.

THIS win gave Mr Haxton and Harry an encouraging start.

They did not lose a hole until the short eleventh where Sir Humphrey sank a long putt for a 2. Harry's side went into the lead again at the fourteenth, where Sir Humphrey hit his drive into the rough, and all Dare could do was hack out of the heather.

The fifteenth hole was halved and they climbed a hillock to the next tee. The sixteenth was an awkward short hole. The green lay below the tee in a basin surrounded by heather.

Mr. Haxton drove off, watched the ball, then gave a heart-rending groan as he saw a puff of sand in the bunker to the right of the green.

Sir Humphrey hit the green with his iron shot, but left Dare with a long putt.

They went tramping in single file along the footpath, and Hancox passed Harry's number eight iron.

As Harry approached he saw the ball lying near the bottom of the hazard. It was not too bad a lie at all.

There was quite a step down

into the bunker and, as he took it, he stumbled and over-balanced. In preventing himself from falling, he pushed his club into the sand—though not near enough to the ball to disturb it.

Dare said something to Sir Humphrey, who cleared his throat with a fruity cough. "I'm sorry," said Haxton, "he smirked, "but we must claim the hole."

"What?" gasped the American.

"Your partner's club touched the ground," replied Sir Humphrey.

Harry's side hardly believe his ears. Technically he had broken the rule that stated that a club should not touch the ground in a bunker, but it had been due to a stumble.

"Okay," snapped Mr. Haxton. "It's the hole."

The match was now all square, with two holes to play. At the seventeenth, both sides were down in four strokes.

The eighteenth was a long hole, a bogey five, and sloped gently uphill. It was the turn of the amateurs to drive. Sir Humphrey hit his best tee shot of the day.

Mr. Haxton had a grim expression as he took his driver and shuffled into his stance.

"You're not too blooming tense," Harry stated bluntly. "You look like a frozen duck."

The American chuckled explosively and relaxed. Harry kept his fingers crossed. Haxton lammed into the tee, whizzed away over the bracken in front of the tee, reached the fairway with plenty to spare.

As Harry approached the ball he saw it was sitting up well. He edged over to Hancox.

"Slip me the driver," he muttered, for he had decided to use the most powerful club in his bag.

The caddie looked at him hard and passed over the driver.

Harry took a terrific swing and hit at the ball with all the power in his arms and shoulders. "Suffering cats!" yelled Mr. Haxton as the ball vanished in the distance.

"If you ain't on the green you're close up," Hancox burred.

Dare played his shot with his brassie, but his ball did not reach the green.

As they approached they saw that Harry's ball was indeed on the green. It lay about fifteen feet from the pin.

It was Sir Humphrey's turn. He chipped for the green, was a bit too strong and saw the ball pull up on the far side of the flag-stick.

Dare putted to within a foot of the hole which meant his side would finish with 5.

With his cheeks puffed out, Mr. Haxton putted. It was a good one, and the ball finished 18 inches from the hole. Harry tapped it in, and they were through into the second round.

Next Tuesday, Harry ends up in trouble—because of a piece of good luck!

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I AM A FOOTBALL SPY



JINX ON J.D.

HAVING spent all my working life in football, I look on sports reporters with mixed feelings. Sometimes they do a lot of harm, but a good writer can be a valuable friend.

J. D. Johnson was one of the best. He was a veteran reporter who had been on the staff of the "Burnham News" for as long as I can remember.

My name is Bill Powell, and I'm the chief scout for Burnham City. I recall J. D. Johnson reporting our games in my own playing days, and the sports page wouldn't have looked the same without a column from J.D.

J.D. was a good friend to us. It was he who first told me about Barry Chester, a promising young amateur right-half.

At that time, Barry Chester was a copy-boy with the "Burnham News." That meant he ran messages and did odd jobs for the reporters. It was Barry's ambition to be a reporter himself one day.

It was easy to see that Johnson was Barry's hero. Soon after I met the youngster he confided in me that he hoped to follow in the footsteps of J.D. as a sports writer. He was modelling himself on the veteran journalist.

Barry was a useful player at right-half. He had plenty of courage, and he never shirked a tackle. He had brains, too, and he always distributed the ball intelligently.

His natural skill soon took him into the third team, and I was confident that it would not be long before he would be in first-class football.

In the meantime, I was busy

with my usual work of scouting. One Saturday I got back to Burnham late in the evening after watching a player down south. I bought a late sports edition of the "News," as usual, to see what Johnson had to say about our first-team game.

The City had been at home to Hinton United, and we had drawn, one goal each. According to the report, it had been a ding-dong game. J.D. went on to say—

"Hinton United were unlucky not to get a penalty when Benton, the City right-back, handled, but the referee did not whistle. Hinton may feel that harsh decision—or lack of decision—robbed them of a point."

J.D. always spoke his mind, even when friends were concerned, but he was always fair. I was sure that his rap for Matt Benton, the referee, was justified.

The next time I met our manager, John Freeman, we started discussing the Hinton game, and I mentioned the penalty incident. John frowned. "Yes, I read about it," he nodded. "But I don't understand it!"

"You don't think Matt Benton did handle?"

"I'm positive he didn't," answered John. "I don't know what incident J.D. is referring to. The only possibility I can think of was when Benton scrambled a ball away, and his clearance was deflected by the referee! The ball hit the ref., but Matt collected it again on the rebound. He certainly didn't handle the ball."

"Well, it's easy to misunderstand something that happens quickly," I remarked. "Yes, we all make mistakes," agreed John. "Even old J.D."

But that was only the first

of several mistakes that J.D. made. The following week he travelled with our first team to Redfield and reported on a game which we lost by the only goal scored.

Pete Bennett, the City centre-forward, missed a chance to even the score when he failed to collect a good pass, with the Redfield goalkeeper out of position" wrote J.D. "What's up with J.D.," snorted Pete when he read that comment. "I was a yard off-side! The linesman was all ready to wag if I'd moved a muscle!"

The week after that I travelled with the Reserves to a game at Parley, a few miles away. I wanted to see the game because Barry Chester, the young copy-boy, was getting his first game in the second team.

The Reserves won, two goals to nil, and Barry played a big part in the victory. He was a two-footed player, who worked tirelessly, providing a solid link between attack and defence.

WHY DID HE WHISTLE?

THE following week Barry Chester had his chance in the first team. A run of injuries made John Freeman decide to play Barry.

We were at home again, to Shelford Albion, and I was taking my place in the stand when I saw Johnson climbing the stairs to the Press Box. He was grey-haired and elderly, but usually he had a cheerful spring in his step that made you forget his age.

Now, however, he looked a worried man. I remembered what people were saying about him—"Old J.D. is getting past it!"

The big crowd raised a roar

when the familiar blue and white stripes of the City appeared. Barry Chester looked tense, which was only to be expected. He was rather young to face an important event like this.

Shelford were above us in the league table, and they were hoping to be even higher in ninety minutes' time. Our record had not been good during the past few weeks, mainly because of the run of injuries I mentioned.

Joe Kenny, our captain and centre-half, lost the toss. Shelford took advantage of what wind there was, and the City kicked off.

We made good progress down the field, but the solid Shelford defence blocked every move near goal. Shelford brought the ball away into our half and for a while there was some dull midfield play. Both sides were trying to size each other up and not give away chances.

Barry Chester came into action when Shelford broke through on their left. Peterson, their inside-left, swerved on to the ball. Barry made a lunge at him, and Peterson beat him. Barry recovered quickly, and went after him.

Barry had a good turn of speed. He moved inside Peterson, and crowded him away from the goal. The move failed, but when Peterson ran the ball over the line—

Barry got his forward line moving a moment later with a nicely judged, long ball. Nothing came of it, and soon afterwards Peterson came down again with the ball. This time Barry was steadier in the tackle, and he took the ball away from the inside-left.

There was no score at half-time, and I nipped down to the dressing-room to hear what advice John Freeman would give the lads. His talks on tactics were always worth listening to.

John was preparing to hold forth when I got there. He looked round at the players and counted heads.

"Somebody missing," he frowned. "Where's Barry Chester?"

"He nipped along to the phone box," Joe Kenny spoke up.

John nodded. Barry wasn't the first young player who just couldn't wait to telephone his family and tell them how he was getting on. But John's frown deepened when the minutes ticked by, and Barry was still away.

John started his talk, telling the lads to keep the game open, and not let Shelford hustle them. He had almost finished when Barry hurried into the room.

"Keep sticking to Peterson,"

A motor cyclist rode across a tight-rope between two mountains.

John told him. "Take it steady and you'll hold him all right."

The second half was very similar to the first. Our lads tried to follow John's advice, but they couldn't gain the upper hand. It was not a particularly outstanding match apart from two small incidents that puzzled the crowd.

The first occurred when Shelford were attacking. They crowded our defence back, and scumbled developed round the goal. The ball lifted high over the ruck of players and heads went up for it. Peterson, the Shelford inside-left, jumped highest, and he headed the ball into the net.

The crowd's roar was cut short when it was seen that the referee was not awarding a goal. He was signalling for an indirect free-kick in favour of the City.

A few minutes later the crowd had more to argue about. Time Roy Harper, our outside-left, was making travel for goal. The Shelford right-back plunged at him. It was a fair charge, with plenty of weight behind it.

Roy spun round and the back staggered. The referee was close up with the game, and he whistled at once, with our fans howling for a foul.

Roy looked dazed, and the back had a hand to his face. Both trainers ran on, and their magic sponges worked wonders. Then the referee said something to Roy.

Our fans yelled again. They thought Roy was being cautioned, yet it looked as if the foul, if there had been a foul, was the other way.

Several of the players gathered round. There was a bit of a natter, and it was difficult to see just what was going on. At last, the group broke up, and the referee waved for the ball.

Our fans were annoyed and mystified when they saw that the referee was giving a "dropped ball"—what is usually known as a "bounce-up." They thought Roy was the victim of a bad decision.

The argument was still going on when Pete Bennett scored a lovely goal just before time. The game ended with that score, the City winning by the only goal.

I made my way into the stand to join the tea-party that was always held for officials

and friends afterwards. Officials of the City and Shelford mingled in the boardroom. The referee joined us, and I buttonholed him. I was interested to get his version of the incidents.

"They may have looked strange from the stand, but there was nothing unusual really," smiled the referee. "To head that goal I disallowed, Peterson put his hands on the shoulders of one of his team-mates, and pushed himself up. That comes under the heading of ungentlemanly conduct."

"In that second incident, Harper spun round and accidentally hit the back in the face," the referee went on. "The referee awarded a big sinnet ring, and it cut the back's face. I told Harper to take the ring off and give it to me, which he did. It was dangerous to other players. I wasn't penalising him in any way."

"The referee awarded a big sinnet ring, and it cut the back's face. I told Harper to take the ring off and give it to me, which he did. It was dangerous to other players. I wasn't penalising him in any way."

"Did you spot the explanation of those incidents, J.D.?" asked the journalist. The journalist hesitated, then smiled.

"You'll have to read my column tonight to find out, Bill," he answered.

BLOWER BARRY.

SKIMMED through Johnson's report when I bought my evening paper. His explanation of the incidents was the same as the referee's.

The interesting point was that J.D. had sent in his story before hearing the referee's account. It was pretty shrewd to solve the queries that had baffled most of the crowd.

J.D. had a few words about Barry Chester.

"Chester made a reasonable debut at right-half," he wrote. "He will be more effective when he learns to curb his hasty moves."

Not very enthusiastic, perhaps, but fair enough.

For the next few games Barry Chester was the automatic choice at right-half. I didn't see many of the matches, because I was usually away on winning trips.

With everything going the way he wanted it, Barry Chester ought to have been on top of the world, but strangely enough, he wasn't.

He tried to join in the larks and leg-pulls of the other players, but he appeared to find it hard to be light-hearted. The rest of the team had nicknamed him Blower, and I asked why.

Because he's always on the blower," Joe Kenny told me, grinning at Barry. "I don't know who he rings, but he rushes to the telephone at every match. I reckon somebody in his family is too mean

to buy a paper and read J.D.'s report of the game!"

Barry smiled, but he didn't respond to the ribbing. He had a weight on his mind, and John Freeman had noticed it as well.

"I'm wondering if I'm trying to bring young Barry along too fast," John said to me. "I'd like you to have a look at him in our next game and see what you think, Bill. I want to watch the Reserves this week."

That week was an away match with Foxley Wanderers. They were playing their international left wing of Parry and Meadows. Barry Chester and Matt Benton, our right-back, were the busiest men on the field.

I was struck by the difference in Barry's play since I had last seen him in action. It was difficult to say exactly what was wrong. He looked like a player who had gone stale.

His dogged efforts held up Meadows for a long time, but at last the Foxley inside-left managed to beat him. Meadows took a pass, ran on, and scored.

The Wanderers won by that one goal. After the game I met J. D. Johnson, who had come along to cover the game, as usual. I offered him a lift back in my car, and he accepted.

We were passing through a town about halfway there when I noticed an A.A. sign on a lamp-post up ahead. It was one of those yellow direction signs that the A.A. put up to help motorists. I asked J.D. what it said. He squinted out of the window as I slowed down.

"Diversión," he announced. Most of the traffic was turning into the road the sign indicated, so I followed. We got into a slow-moving line of traffic, and I peered out. A chap in a peaked cap was directing the cars into a car park alongside a large hall.

"Isn't this a diversion?" I called.

"Diversión?" answered the car-park attendant. "There's no diversion. This is the exhibition hall!"

Some tricky manoeuvring to get out of the traffic and return to the main road, but I made it at last. J.D. was full of apologies for mis-reading the sign.

When we finally reached Burnham I dropped J.D. near his office, and went on to the City ground. John Freeman had not been to Foxley, and he was waiting in his room for my report.

"Barry Chester is finding the going a bit hard," John informed me. "At least, that's what J.D. thinks."

He had a copy of the evening paper on his desk, carrying the report that J.D. had telephoned from Foxley.

It was a fair and intelligent summation of the game. About that winning goal, J.D. had written, "Chester found Meadows hard to hold all the

afternoon, and a defensive blunder by the City right-half let Meadows through to score."

"I'm afraid that's true," I admitted.

"I don't often pay much attention to newspaper reports, but J.D. knows what he's talking about," John declared. "If both you and J.D. think Chester is off-form, I'll give the lad a run in easier football. He'll go back to the Reserves next week. A spell there may help him to put the edge back on his game."

WRONG WRITE-UP.

THE following Saturday, Barry was in the Reserves, who were away to Redfield Reserves. I arranged to go with the team.

Redfield gave our Reserves the licking of the season. They scored six without reply, and five of those goals came from the left. Barry Chester was the worst player on the field.

He played as if his heart wasn't in the game. He had seemed to find it a strain in the first team, but being in the Reserves knocked the stuffing out of him altogether.

The lads were a pretty silent crowd in the coach going home. Barry didn't say a word all the way, and as soon as we reached Burnham, he rushed off and bought a newspaper.

I bought one as well and found that our team had lost 1-0 to Woodburn. J.D.'s report of the game was rather vague, unlike the crisp stories he had been doing lately. About Woodburn's winning goal he had this to say—

"Hornor, the Woodburn centre-forward, hustled the City goalkeeper and the ball into the net. The incident caused some excitement, but the referee allowed the goal to stand."

As soon as possible I found out the opinion of the City players on that goal. They were amazed by J.D.'s version of it.

"I don't know what old J.D. is talking about," muttered Joe Kenny. "That report is like those dud ones he was writing some time back."

"Didn't Hornor score like that?" I asked.

"He didn't touch me," replied Willy Sampson, our goalkeeper. "Wilman, their inside-right, was standing close to the line when the ball came across chest-high. It looked as if Wilman couldn't get the ball under control in time, but Hornor came beating up and charged him."

He bashed Wilman and the ball clean over the line. It was Wilman who went into the net, not me. It was a pretty smart move, and Hornor caught me napping."

Our players started their week's training on Tuesday. That morning I called in at the office of the "Burnham News." J.D. was sitting at his typewriter, and he was pottering

(Continued on Page 9.)

133 DIFFERENT STAMPS

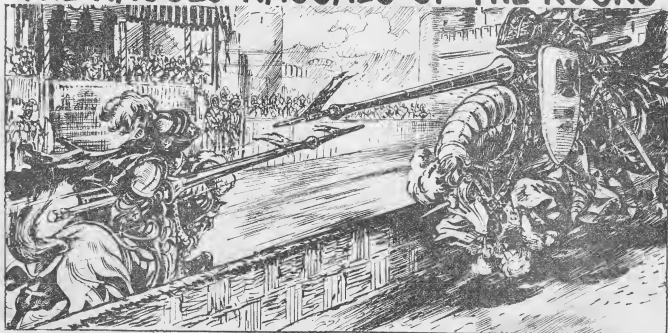
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An English shepherd boy fights a giant Norman knight—to make sure the Ragged Rascals win a battle that hasn't begun!

THE RAGGED RASCALS OF THE ROCKS



THE NORMAN GIANT.

EARL ALSTON of Spatrie had no doubt that the Normans would attack his people time and time again, for he was the only man who still held out against them.

The rest of England had been brought to heel by William the Conqueror, but in the high mountains of Westmorland and Cumberland, Earl Alston and his men still offered stout resistance.

Only a few hundred in number, they lived in a secret valley near the lake called Crummock Water. However, they had other supporters who, living as small crofters in the outlying hills, were ready to supply Earl Alston with information about the Normans, and rally to his call when their services were required.

In addition, every shepherd, every herder was an outpost for the English earl; and their vigilance never relaxed.

Thor Thyrolsen, a boy of seventeen, was the leader of the shepherds—the ragged rascals as the Normans called them. These shepherds, dressed in multi-coloured cloaks of rag, were all feet-floated youngsters who knew the mountainous country of the Lake District like the backs of their hands.

Their ragged cloaks blended with the colour of the rocks, and their ability to move quickly over country where others hardly dared to crawl had led the Normans to believe they were spirits rather than human beings.

It was one of the shepherds who brought news of a large Norman army marching from London in 1071. King

William himself led the army.

It was truly a mighty force, bigger even than the army which landed at Hastings in 1066. The barons, knights, and lancemen were well armed with lance, sword, and battle-truncheon.

The foot-soldiers marched first, with the knights and lancemen riding behind to support them. Then came the barons with the king in their midst; and among the barons, his polished helmet standing high above all others, rode Rogier Montgomery.

This Rogier was a terrible man. He stood nearly seven feet tall; his armour weighed two hundred pounds, and his horse was an enormous animal.

In the tournaments, Rogier was unbeatable and carried all before him; and in battle he was without doubt the hero of the Normans. Such was his reputation that men would follow him anywhere.

This then, was the formidable array that marched from London to Kendal, forced its way to Staveley Town and joined Ranulf the Red at Ambleside.

Its progress was watched with dread by the scattered crofters, and from their positions high up in the mountains the shepherds sent word to Earl Alston in the secret valley by Buttermere.

But the Earl was not dismayed. His army gathered, secretly; skirmishers went out to harry the Normans with their long bows and steel-tipped shafts, and a watch was set over Ambleside to report the doings of the Normans.

The outpost to whom this important task was given was Thor Thyrolsen. And it was Thor, keeping watch from his hiding-place in the hills, who discovered the strength and

the weakness of the Norman army.

A MIGHTY SHOW.

THE descent of the king's army upon Ambleside was more like a royal procession than a military manoeuvre.

This was the biggest and most powerful army ever raised on English soil, and the troops, because the king was with them, and because such a famous soldier as Rogier Montgomery was riding among the lances, were filled with confidence.

The situation, too, was very encouraging. Ranulf's men were garrisoned at Penrith and Ravensglass, and with the king's army at Ambleside there were no long lines of communication to be guarded.

King William was in a jovial mood. To rest his heart and put them in good heart for the fray, he announced a grand tourney.

Tents and pavilions were set up on the pleasant flat lands at the head of Lake Windermere. Armoured knights cantered to and fro; silk-clad ladies graced the enclosures and a great display of chivalrous sports celebrated the victory which was still to be won!

Thor Thyrolsen, seeing that the common folk were permitted to watch the tournament, came down from the hills and mingled with the crowds.

He was a shrewd lad, was Thor, and it was not long before he realised a very important fact. The Norman army might be commanded by King William; and the knights, barons and lancemen might acknowledge him as their leader, but the

vassals, the common bowmen and foot soldiers put their faith in the massive figure of Rogier Montgomery.

He was their hero. When his opponent went down in the joust a mighty shout went up from the crowd. And when the nobles closed around the king and rode away at the end of each day's sport, it was for Rogier that the loudest cheers arose.

An idea began to take shape in Thor's mind and on the second day of the tourney, he paid great attention to the complicated ceremony which accompanied it.

He noted how each nobleman was supported by his attendant squire, and how the squire, whilst not allowed to attack his master's opponent, was nevertheless at hand to protect the knight if he should be unhorsed, and defend him from blows if he were wounded. That night Thor was relieved at his outpost by another young shepherd and travelled back to the secret valley. He reported all that he had seen and heard and the Earl's face fell as he listened.

"I have a feeling that war on this scale is too much for us, Thor," he remarked. "We have managed well enough up to now, but only by trickery. We shall never survive in pitched battle against such an army."

"We can try," said Thor promptly. "Indeed, we have no alternative. From what I saw and heard, it is plain that the king will not make a treaty with us; he has his army and is determined to crush us."

"But be of good cheer; he is not the first man to come against us with an overwhelming army! Stout hearts and strong arms served us well before, and they'll serve us

The albatross has a wing span of 11 feet 4 inches.

no less this time!"

Leaving the Earl, Thor made his way home. But a little later he might have been seen making his way across to the armourer's shop with a heavy bundle on his shoulder.

He had, of course, with the armourer, the words with the blow up to redness and the hammer rang on the anvil. The bundle was opened and the contents examined, measured, and worked upon till a late hour.

When all was finished Thor went in search of one of his fellow shepherds—a young boy by the name of Edgar—and having sworn him to secrecy he laid before him the plan he had conceived.

The check of it took Edgar's breath away, but after a little persuasion he agreed to join forces with Thor and give it a trial.

THE HEADLESS WONDER.

THE last day of the grand tourney at Ambleside produced some very fine jousting indeed.

Not only were all the Norman champions engaged, but certain English knights had ridden in from the surrounding districts to take part.

These men belonged to parts of the country which had long since submitted to the Normans and they now regarded William as the rightful King of England.

There was nothing strange about these men jousting at a tourney with the Norman conquerors, because Knighthood knew no national boundaries. It was a universal order of chivalry and an English knight was accepted on equal terms by a Norman knight.

All this, however, made no difference to one thing! Rogier Montgomeri was still the undisputed champion of the tourney! Great care was taken when choosing his opponents to see that only good, experienced fighters were matched against him.

But Rogier overthrew them all, English and Norman alike. Twenty knights he defeated during the tourney, and in the passage at arms his party won an overwhelming victory.

When the last run had been contested, the knights—those who had not been so badly hurt—formed up to receive the compliments of the king.

Suddenly a small, boyish figure, mounted on a pony entered the lists. He was dressed in the most dazzling garb and carried in his hand a long cow-horn on which he proceeded to blow a loud, mournful blast. Crossing in front of the assembled knights

he halted in front of the royal seat.

"Your Majesty," he called. "My master, Earl Caradoc of Wales, craves permission to run a course with your champion!"

With this the boy (he was young Edgar) tossed a large mailed gauntlet on to the ground.

King William and the officials held a hurried meeting. "Who is he, this Caradoc?" demanded His Majesty. "Is he a true knight and fit adversary for our champion?"

"He may well be, sire," said the Lord Chamberlain, cautiously, "for there are true knights among your Majesty's Welsh subjects. In any case, it would be unwise to refuse this challenge, particularly as Your Majesty about to make war upon the rebels."

"Very well," replied William. "Let Rogier Montgomeri take up the challenge. Let the contestants prepare themselves."

The Norman champion advanced and took up the mailed gauntlet on the point of his lance; then, to the accompaniment of a mighty roar from the crowd, retired to one end of the list.

Every eye was now fixed on the opposite end of the field, and presently a great hoot of laughter arose. The king frowned—then gasped!

Into the lists rode the most absurd figure. It was Thor, who was dressed in armour which had been cut down to fit his slight figure, and was mounted on the stoutest pack-pony he had been able to find.

He looked every inch a knight and behind him rode Edgar, carrying his shield and three lances.

Nobody had ever seen such a tiny knight before; and whilst the crowd roared with laughter the officials frowned.

There was a lot of hurried consultation between the Lord Chamberlain and his marshals; but the upshot of it all was that there was nothing in the rules of chivalry governing the size of knights or even their age.

The only way to find out whether young Thor was really a knight was either to make exhaustive enquiries in Wales, or let him run a course and see how he carried himself.

Rogier Montgomeri did not know what to make of it, but since he had no doubts at all in his ability to sweep this miniature challenger off the face of the earth, he agreed to meet him.

The three small lances which Edgar carried were then inspected by list officials to see that their points were blunted in accordance with the rules of the tourney. But no one noticed that although their points were blunt, two of them differed from the third. They had been bent until the wood cracked! They were quite useless.

When the preliminaries were completed the two knights retired to their places, took

their shields, laid their lances at rest and awaited the signal. The Lord Chamberlain nodded, a trumpet blew—and with a thunder of hoofs, the two figures hurtled towards each other.

The list was divided by a twenty foot run of low fence which Thor and Rogier Montgomeri approached from opposite ends, each having the fence on his right hand and aiming his lance diagonally across it at his opponent.

In this manner they bore down on each other, but Thor, his pony being swifter off the mark than the great war-horse of his opponent, met his opponent well beyond the halfway mark.

Both men struck home with their lance-points on the other's shield, but by a slight twist of his shield Thor deflected Rogier's point and at the same time his own lance—being cracked halfway through—shattered to pieces under the impact.

It was a good, clean run and the crowd roared its approval. Thor was quite happy—things were going exactly as he had planned.

With fresh lances they charged again; and this time Rogier meant to end it once and for all. He went forward, aiming at the centre of Thor's shield and determined to sweep both horse and rider over backwards—but things did not work out that way at all.

Thor was so much lower than Rogier, that the Norman could not strike him squarely, and once again the Norman lance was deflected by the shield whilst Thor's lance again splintered under the impact.

By the rules of chivalry there was one more course to be run, and this time, if neither man was thrown down, they would draw their swords and continue the fight hand-to-hand.

This was what Rogier intended to do. He had realised that, not being able to strike his tiny adversary squarely, this was his best chance. Thor, on the other hand, had a trick left to play. This time his lance was a sound one.

On the last run the Norman lifted his lance-point, and pointed it at Thor's helmet; and because his lance was so much the longer of the two he struck home a split-second sooner than Thor. It was a fair strike and should have bowled Thor from his saddle. But, to Rogier's horror, the helmet burst asunder and went flying across the lists—leaving a headless trunk in the saddle!

The next second Thor's lance took Rogier under the left armpit, but this time instead of shattering, the ashen shaft bent under the shock of impact. And Rogier, riding carelessly, felt himself twisted sideways.

He made a great effort to save himself, but with the unexpected power of the

thrust and the shock of seeing the headless trunk of his opponent sitting firmly in the saddle, he lost his balance and crashed heavily to the ground.

Thor wheeled and galloped towards where the king sat—Edgar galloping behind him. He flourished his lance. Then, still the crowd still stood in horrified silence, the two English shepherd boys wheeled and galloped clean out of the lists and away towards the mountains. Not a finger was lifted to stop them.

Slowly the fallen champion struggled to his feet. He was dazed by his fall and clung to the arm of his squire.

"The helmet!" he gasped. "Fetch it, Alan—fetch it that I may look on the face of that man!"

The squire walked to where the smashed helmet lay and gingerly prodded it with his foot. He stared at it in amazement.

"Sir!" he gasped, then his voice rose to a shriek and he turned to flee. "There is no head! There is no head! The helmet is empty! Witchcraft!"

A CHANGED ARMY.

TWO days later, with all its brilliant pageantry, the Norman army moved out of Ambleside, but it was not the army that had marched in so bravely a bare week before!

Then the troops had been burning with confidence; then their champion had been a champion indeed. Now a grim terror lurked beneath the surface and in the night-watches men spoke fearfully together in low whispers.

Rogier Montgomeri rode like a man sentenced to dying, hunched in the saddle, cowering fearfully to right and left. And the king—the red-haired monarch who had boasted about what he was going to achieve—had found himself gripped with shivering panic and had remained behind in Ambleside.

There were those who thought that the king's pains had come at a very opportune moment for him—but they took good care that no officer heard them expressing this opinion!

It was not a happy army! Men remembered that Rogier Montgomeri, the pride of the Normans, had been defeated in combat by a tiny, empty suit of armour. The very thought of armour that could run cold, that could be so easily thrown up and down in the cold, dim moonlight, was enough to make a man's blood begin to freeze.

From the darkness of the night, the men's backs, as they lay down, were turned away from their fires.

Not a man, not a thing was seen, nothing was heard, save the sudden whisper of the wind. Yet in the dead of the night men lay

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The next day a hundred men deserted and the skirmishers refused to skirmish. A score were executed—but it made no difference to the rest.

At nightfall it was the same story again. Earl Alston's archers crept up into the hills around the Norman camp and sent their long shafts whistling down.

Four score died that night and it was a thoroughly demoralised army that rose to face another day of marching.

The day was uneventful save that more soldiers deserted, but in the evening the head of the column merged from the mountains into a broad, grassy valley.

They saw, somehow ahead of them, a large body of men drawn up in battle-formation; and Ranulf the Red, who was commanding the army in the absence of the king, saw a chance to save the situation.

"This is what I have always hoped for, Rogier," he said to the Norman champion. "The enemy arrayed to meet us in a set battle. We have their measure, if only they will stand and fight."

To the sound of trumpets, the Normans filed out of the pass and spread out across the valley. The archers and foot soldiers were in the fore, not in a continuous line, but set in groups so that the mounted men in rear could pass through their ranks when the time came.

Horsemen were massed on both flanks with orders to overlap the foot soldiers when the battle was joined and charge

down on the English like a pair of pincers closing together.

Now in the centre, Ranulf and his chief officers waited impatiently for their men to take up their positions.

Steadily, and in perfect order the Norman host advanced. The troops were in good heart for at last they had an enemy they could see.

Their shouts filled the valley; the clash of their weapons rang to the darkening skies and the measured tread of pacing hoofs rolled like the thunder of drums.

NORMAN ROUT.

THE English awaited the onslaught in grim silence.

They were drawn up in two long stretching right across the valley. In front were their archers and axe-men—the archers leaning on their long bow-staves and the axe-men resting with both hands on the hfts of their battle-axes, with the blades planted on the ground.

They appeared to be at ease, watching the oncoming host with a sort of detached curiosity. Behind them were a small group of mounted men; but so tiny were the horses that the heads of the riders barely over-topped the helmets of the front rank.

Suddenly, as the Normans advanced in the waning light, a cow-horn blew a long, winding note. The English stirred as each man lifted his hands to his helmet.

a-side always is. You probably know that the ball is not allowed to go above shoulder-height in this type of game. Our boys had developed plenty of skill in moving the ball along the carpet, and J.D. peered down as the ball flashed from end to end.

He was trying to concentrate on the dark-haired lad. He peered over the balcony, his eyes screwed up, then he sat back quickly when a whistle signalled the end.

"What's your verdict?" I asked J.D.

"Well, I don't know," he mused. "The lad seems competent enough. If you think he's good, that should be enough, Bill. What did you say the lad's name was?"

"Come and meet him," I suggested.

FOUND OUT.

WE went downstairs. I looked into the dressing-room and raised my voice.

"Barry?" I called.

Barry Chester came hurrying out. He gave a welcoming grin as he saw J.D., but the veteran journalist stared at him, then turned to me.

"You know, Bill?" he gasped.

"I guessed," I admitted. "I'm sorry I played this trick on you, but I wanted to make

Then, before the horrified eyes of the Normans, every man in the English host quietly removed his helmet and tossed it to the ground at his feet. They stood there, these grim, silent figures, and where the helmets had been there was now nothing to be seen. No head, no face—nothing but two rows of headless trunks!

The Normans halted. Their shouts died away and a confused murmuring arose from their ranks. A few, braver than the rest, tried to steady their comrades. But on the instant, cow-horns blew and a wierd, moaning noise swelled through the valley.

Then, slowly, blindly, jerking their limbs like men risen from the grave, the headless figures moved forward. They raised no battle-cries, they made no sound. There was nothing but the shuffle of feet, the creak of armour-joints and the awful moaning of the horns.

There were brave men among the Norman knights, but all their efforts were unavailing. The mass of ignorant soldiery in front stood for an instant, rooted to the spot.

Then, with a terrible cry, they turned to flee. Nothing could stop them. In their terror they swarmed through the mounted ranks and in a second the Norman army was a confused press of shouting, struggling footmen and horses.

Horses went down, unable to keep a footing; men screamed, knights cursed and laid about them with their swords. But like the receding tide, the packed mass swept back to

sure. You couldn't recognise Barry when he was some feet away from you in the gym. Your eyes are failing, aren't they?"

J.D. nodded slowly. "They suddenly started to go at the beginning of this season," he explained, in a voice nearly a whisper. "That's why I wrote such bad reports. I couldn't follow the game properly."

And that's where you came in, Barry?" I queried.

"That's right," Barry nodded. "It was my fault, really, all this business. J.D. was really cut up at the idea of having to give up reporting football, so he didn't tell the editor what was wrong."

"I went from one specialist to another, but none of them could help," J.D. explained. "Barry suggested he could do the reports under my name until I found someone who could cure me, and nobody need know."

He smiled faintly.

"I shouldn't have let him do it, but giving up newspaper work would be like cutting off an arm."

"So all the time you were playing in our first team, Barry, you were reporting on the games as well?" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he nodded. "I phoned through a report at half-time, and another at the

wards the mountain pass.

Earl Alston, standing high on a nearby crag, gave the signal and from the surrounding heights his concealed warriors rose from among the rocks. With ringing shouts they poured down the slopes into the disordered mass, and at the same moment the headless army, both foot and horse, swept forward.

It was never known how many Normans died that day, for their numbers were too great to be tallied. But of the English there were slain but five and wounded less than three score.

When it was all over, Earl Alston gathered his men, and the booty was gathered in great heaps to be carried away to the secret valley.

While this was going on, the Earl crossed to where his small band of headless warriors stood, and a small figure moved on a pony rode forth to meet him.

The figure had no head but just below the steel gorget of the armour, a slit had been cut in the chain mail—and through this slit twinkled the sharp eyes of Thor Thryldsen.

And so, with much laughter, the headless demons were unharnessed. They were just shepherd-boys, dressed, like Thor Thryldsen, in armour which was much too big for them, but there was not a single soldier among them and who would have believed it!

Thor Thryldsen knocks the stuffing out of a Norman army next week—by going for a swim in Crummock Water!



I AM A FOOTBALL SPY

(Continued from Page 6.)

about in his room, looking pretty gloomy.

"There's a young lad I've high hopes of, J.D.," I greeted him. "Would you come along and see what you think of him?"

J.D. seemed a bit reluctant, but I talked him into it.

"He'll be in our gym this evening," I told him. "Come along then."

I knew that J.D. was usually first in the evenings, after the first edition had gone to press. To make quite sure, I called for him that evening and took him along to the ground.

I took J.D. up to the gallery of our big gym, and we looked down. A bunch of the lads, in sweaters, shorts, and pumps, were staring a seven-a-side game.

"That's the lad," I told Johnson, pointing to a well-built, dark-red youngster.

The game was fast, as seven-

Next week Bill Powell persuades John Freeman to play a youngster in the first team—to save a man's life!

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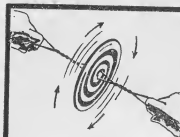
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Armed only with a whip, Clint makes a desperate bid to avenge the shooting of Snowdrop!

SNOWDROP, THE MULE WITH A SQUINT



CLINT SEEKS REVENGE.

MY old pard, Clint Billings, was normally a cheerful feller, as full at fun as a ten-year-old, despite the fact that he was nigh on sixty years of age.

But on that day in the late summer of 1861 he was boiling mad.

On the previous day Clint and I, Johnny Stark, had helped a miner named Con Bitters to defeat an attempt by five gunmen to jump his claim. While we were in the mine tunnel, an enemy of mine called Jeb Sutter, and an unknown confederate of his, had deliberately buried us alive by varying away a roof support.

We had dug our way out, only to find that Sutter and his companion had stolen my string of mules, along with their loads of valuable gold quartz which we had agreed to take to San Francisco and sell for Con Bitters.

Through these exciting and dangerous events, we had all been saved. Clint had taken my string of mules until his white mule, Snowdrop, escaped from Sutter and returned to us with flanks and legs covered with blood. When we saw Snowdrop had been shot, Clint for so many years had almost spoke the words of revenge.

I had never seen such a perfect understanding between a man and a mule as there was between those two. I know that Clint was as fond of Snowdrop as I was of him. Snowdrop was as lead mule to me, and a more intelli-

gent beast never lived.

It was an education to see how the white mule picked his way over difficult terrain, and the rest of the pack-animals had great faith in him and would follow him anywhere.

When Snowdrop found his way back to us, and Clint saw the marks of the brutal whipping the animal had taken, his usually merry brown eyes went as hard as pebbles and he swore to put the whip to the two men who had so ill-treated his mule. He meant it, too, and I could almost feel sorry for Sutter and his friend.

When it came to using a bull-whip, Clint Billings had to be seen to be believed. He always carried a fifteen-footer coiled over his left shoulder and could use it with uncanny speed and accuracy. He could flick a fly off a mule's rump without touching the animal's hide, and when he so wished, he could make the oily lash cut through flesh to the bone.

As a mulcter, I also carried a whip, and I practised hard with it whenever I had the time, but I was still a long way from being in Clint's class. However, under his tuition, I was improving all the time.

We had decided to take after Sutter and his pal as soon as it was light in order to recover my mules and their valuable load. Clint claimed that, among his many other qualities, Snowdrop numbered the one of being able to track like a blood-hound.

I would have scoffed at this claim a few weeks before, when I hadn't known Clint and Snowdrop so well, but having seen the old-timer's boasts about his remarkable mule

come true so often, I was ready to believe anything Clint said about his mule.

We left Con Bitters in charge of his claim for, with claim-jumping becoming an almost daily event in the area, Con did not dare to leave the diggings unmanned for long.

Right from the start, Snowdrop set off as if he was in a hurry to get somewhere. It was as if he knew we intended to deal severely with the guys who had ill-treated him, and couldn't wait to get his own back.

We had to step out smartly to keep up with the mule. We were in the Sierra Nevadas, which was rough, mountainous country. Snowdrop plodded on, pausing now and again to sniff the ground or to raise his ungainly head and scent the air.

Sutter and his pard had a good six hours start on us, but they had a heavily-laden mule-string to drive along. I knew my mules were not an easy proposition without Snowdrop ramrodding them, so I figured we ought to be able to catch up within a couple of days.

"THEY KILLED SNOWDROP!"

WE made camp at sundown, but were on our way again when the grey streaks of dawn were only just creeping across the land from the east.

Shortly after high noon, we breasted a rise and there, in a wide valley hundreds of feet below us, were a mule-string and two men. There were more than a score of mules in the

line, so evidently Jeb Sutter's own pack animals were in it as well as mine.

"How yuh figurin' to play it, Johnny?" asked Clint, staring after the men we were following.

"We'll let them cross the valley, then follow," I replied. "We'll sneak up on 'em in rough country and get the drop on 'em."

We dropped back beyond the hill crest so that Sutter and his pal would not spot us should they look over their shoulders. As soon as the pair had crossed the valley and disappeared into the hills beyond, we took after them at full speed.

We climbed the slopes on the other side of the valley, pausing at the top to look around. The territory beyond was broken up by sandstone buttes and gorges. Tracks of the mule-string led across a sandy stretch and disappeared round a mass of sandstone.

Clint grabbed Snowdrop's halter to stop the mule from going on ahead of us. We followed the tracks to the sandstone butte. I took a quick look round the corner, and, seeing no sign of the enemy, continued round the bend. Clint followed with Snowdrop. Ahead of us was a jumbled mass of boulders that had fallen from the high ground to our right.

The tracks of the mule-string led straight to the rocks, and I had taken several steps before it occurred to me that it would have been more sensible of Sutter to have led his animals round the boulders instead of into them. But if he had a reason for taking cover, the rocks were the place to head for, and a warning bell seemed to ring in my brain.

"Get back, Clint," I yelled suddenly, but I was too late.

Two rifles spat at us from the mass of boulders. A slug buried its way across the side of my neck, and I realised that only my sudden movement as I warned Clint had saved me from being drilled through the noggin.

Snowdrop gave a peculiar grunt and slumped forward on to his knees, then he rolled over on his side. Blood welled over the animal's forehead from a head wound.

Clint Billings stared aghast at the stricken animal which had taken the bullet intended for him. The old-timer's whiskered face suddenly twisted with grief and fury.

"They killed Snowdrop!" He spoke the words as if he could not believe what he was saying. Then, as the full meaning of them hit him, he repeated them more loudly and on a higher key. "They killed Snowdrop!"

Clint let out a howl of fury, and before I could stop him, he was pelting towards the pile

There are about eleven million robins in Britain.

of rocks from which the shots had come, snatching his coiled whip from his shoulder as he ran.

Of course, it was a fool thing to do, but Clint was not quite sane at that moment. In his grief and fury, he wanted only to get to grips with the men who had killed his animal pal, and the fact that he could get killed himself did not enter his head.

Fortunately for him, Sutter and his companion were using single-shot, muzzle-loading rifles, if they had possessed Remington Rolling Blocks, such as were carried by Clint and me, my veteran pard would have bought himself a one-way trip to Boot Hill by his foolish charge.

As it was, our two ambushers were busy re-loading their rifles when Clint started to dash towards them. He had almost gained the shelter of the fringe of the rock-pile before Jeb Sutter spotted him.

Apparently Jeb had not finished re-charging his rifle, for he appeared over the top of a boulder with a Navy Model Colt clutched in his massive fist. He let fly at Clint, but the old Colts were accurate only at comparatively short range, and Jeb's was no exception.

The shot went close enough to Clint to remind him that, mad though he was, care was needed, and he took cover behind a big boulder. This gave me time to get into position behind a rock from which I could give my partner some help by way of covering fire. I parted Sutter's greasy black hair for him with my first shot, causing him to leap behind cover.

In his eagerness to finish off Clint, Jeb loosed off all six shots from his Colt, which was a cap-and-ball model and would take a long time to re-load.

Clint, the foxy old campaigner, must have been counting Jeb's shots, for on the sixth he abandoned all cover and, with a shrill, triumphant yell, bounded up the slope, his coiled whip in his gnarled right hand.

In his haste to get at the killers of his mule, Clint had apparently forgotten Sutter's companion. Fortunately for him, I hadn't. Jeb's confederate, having re-loaded, raised his rifle for an almost sure-fire shot at the older, bigger, by this time I had another shell in the breach of my Remington.

I drew a quick bead on the man, pulled the trigger, and drilled him as clean as a whistle. He flopped backwards without firing the shot he had intended for Clint.

At the same time, Clint lashed out with his whip in the direction of Sutter's boulder. The fifteen-foot lash snapped over the top of the rock with a report like a pistol shot, jerked back again, and whipped forward once more.

A screech of agony came from Jeb Sutter, then he rose from behind his boulder, clutching his left hand to his face. In

something of a panic, he hurled his empty revolver at Clint, but missed by a foot or more.

Then he grabbed his empty rifle and, clutching it by the barrel in both hands, leapt over his rock to attack Clint.

The old timer set himself. His right arm swung back and forth. The oily, snake-like lash of his bull-whip cracked full in Sutter's face, and the agony of the stroke brought an almost animal-like squeal from my enemy. He dropped his rifle, stopped abruptly, and clapped both hands to the face that had been cut by the lash.

I left cover and ran towards the two men. Clint, his whip-arm moving back and forth in powerful strokes, laid about Jeb Sutter mercilessly. He flayed the man until Jeb sank to the ground, howling for mercy.

I ran up to Clint, grabbed him by the right arm, and wrested the whip from his hand.

"That's enough, pardner,"

I growled.

Clint stared vacantly at me for a moment, then brushed his hand dazedly across his eyes.

"I guess I kinda lost my

temper, Johnny," he breathed. For the first time since I had known him, he looked every one of his many years old.

The killing of Snowdrop had broken him up, and, to tell the truth, I wasn't feeling too chipper about it myself. There was something about Snowdrop that got you liking him a heap when you got to know him.

LET-OFF FOR SUTTER.

GLANCED at Jeb Sutter who still lay on the ground, crying like a baby.

The ruthless mulester's shirt was cut to ribbons and he was bleeding from a dozen different places where the terrible whip had slashed into him.

Sutter had paid a heavy price for his attempts to kill us, and for the killing of Snowdrop. I looked over my shoulder towards where we had left the white mule slumped motionless upon the sand. I stifened with surprise, then I uttered a joyful shout.

"Look, Clint. Look at Snowdrop!"

The older turned listlessly at first, then he, too, gave a

whoop of delight.

Snowdrop was back on his feet. True, he was straddled and looked sick and dizzy, but if he could stand up, he was certainly a long way from being the corpse we had believed him to be.

Both Clint and I forgot all about Jeb Sutter. We pelted back to Snowdrop. He was bleary-eyed and unsteady on his pins when we reached him. Clint snatched off his bandana from round his scrawny neck and mopped the blood from the mule's forehead.

"The slug only polled the son-of-a-gun!" he exclaimed, pointing to a groove that had been cut across the top of Snowdrop's ugly head.

I had seen a wild horse stopped by a good marksman by "polling" it with a bullet.

The "poll" is a lump of bone on top of a horse's head which, if struck hard, will cause the animal to drop as if pole-axed.

This is what had happened to Snowdrop. He had been stunned and not killed as we had imagined, and since the bullet had only skated over his poll, he would be none the worse in a day or two.

I left Clint with Snowdrop and returned to where we had left Jeb Sutter. Jeb was ugly, but now that Clint had worked him over with the whip, he looked even worse.

I took off my pack and pulled out of it a tin of bear-grease.

"Lie on your face, feller, and I'll doctor your cuts," I told him.

He obeyed, silently and sulkily.

I fixed him up as best I could and helped him to tie a bandana round his bleeding face. I left him feeling sorry for himself while I checked up on his friend.

He was dead. I collected the arms of the two men, then went to look at the mule-sting, which was hidden behind the pile of rocks.

As I had thought, Jeb's mules were in the string as well as mine, and each mule was carrying gold-ore. In addition to the ore were the blankets packed on my animals, Jeb and his partner had helped themselves to more of the stuff from the pile outside Con Bitters' mine-shaft.

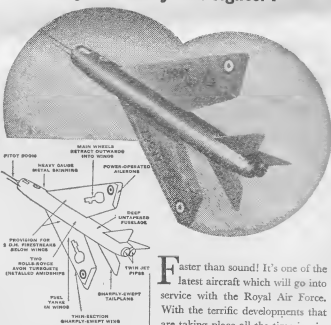
I figured that the twenty-odd mules carried upwards of six thousand dollars' worth of quartz. It was because the ore was unusually hard that Bitters had asked me to buy a small crushing mill and furnace for him in San Francisco.

Extracting the precious metal by hand from the tough quartz would be a long and difficult job. So, we had arranged to take a load of the ore to San Francisco, where we hoped to sell it and to obtain the money to pay for the machinery. Con needed to work his rich claims.

Finding that Sutter had helped himself to Con's valuable ore set me a problem. I certainly didn't intend to let Jeb

GET TO KNOW THE NEW R.A.F.

Can you identify this fighter? *



*This is the English Electric P.1B, Britain's superb new single-seat fighter which flies far above the speed of sound. Wing span 36 ft., length 52 ft. The P.1B has provision for Firestreak guided missiles and 30 mm. Adam guns. It is powered by two Rolls-Royce Avon turbojets with reheat.

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Sutter gets away with it, but my own mules already carried a full load apiece.

I returned and stared coldly at him. "I'll give yuh fifty dollars apiece for yuh mules," I told him curtly.

His dark eyes glared murder at me.

"I ain't sellin'," he growled suddenly.

"Yuh are, bud," I retorted. "Yuh've got over three thousand bucks' worth of Con Bitters' gold ore on the backs of yuh critters and I ain't dumptin' it. I'd be entitled to hang yuh, feller."

Sutter hesitated only a moment or two, then nodded.

I made him write out a bill of sale with a pencil on an envelope I found in my pocket, for I had no intention of letting him claim I had stolen his string.

This done, I gave him his price, checked that he had food and water, and told him to hit the trail to wherever he felt like going.

TROUBLE AHEAD.

WE doctored the whip-
weals of the mule
with the rest of the bear-
grease, then made camp
for the rest of the day and
night.

This would allow the white mule to recover fully from the effects of the stunning bullet. We buried Sutter's friend and we never did discover his name.

The next morning, Snowdrop seemed to have got over the "polling" he had received, so we set a south-westerly course through the Sierra Nevada.

The course we took brought us within ten miles of the boom town, and we were wondering whether to go back to Virginia City to tell Con Bitters that his ore had been recovered and that we would deliver his machinery as promised, while a party of miners came along and saved us the trouble.

They were heading for the Virginia City diggings and one of them agreed to deliver our message to Con Bitters. This was meant that we were able to save ourselves a twenty-mile trek to the town and back.

"Yuh'd best keep yuhr eyes open on the trail west," one of the miners warned us. "We come across a small party of three fellers who'd been dry-gulched and robbed. They was all dead mutton, so we couldn't ask 'em who done it, but it looked like Injun work to us."

Clint and I exchanged knowing glances, for the killing of the three men sounded like the work of the Big Foot Tokana and his band of renegade Washo Indians. We had already had a few tussles with Big Foot, an immense and murderous bandit who stood over seven feet tall.

We had outwitted him, and had reduced the number of his followers, so he had no cause to love us. We thanked the

miners for the news and continued on our way with our eyes peeled.

We made camp off the main trail and decided not to risk making a fire, for fear of attracting the attention of the Washoes. After a cold supper, we turned in.

At dawn, an undisturbed night, cooked breakfast at dawn over a smokeless fire, and got moving again as the sun rose.

Some five miles farther on, we reached the entrance to a long, wide, shallow valley, and there Snowdrop dug in his hoofs and refused to move.

"Snowdrop smells Injuns," Johnny," commented Clint Billings, pointing up the valley.

I looked up the valley, but could see nothing suspicious. This, however, meant nothing, for the white Tokana would take good care in concealing himself and his men if he were waiting for us.

A spur of high ground jutted out towards us from the left range of hills which formed one side of the valley. I nodded towards the spur.

"We'll move over there, Clint, so that the spur hides our movements from Big Foot and his band. They may think we've gone there to make early camp, but when we get behind the spur, we'll double back to that branch and we passed about half a mile back.

"If we take that track, it will probably take us up to the higher slopes of the range. From there, we'll be able to overlook the valley, and Tokana and his boys won't be able to approach us without being seen."

Clint grunted approval and we led the mules behind the spur. Working quickly, we built a fire, and put on some wood which we wet with water so that the fire would smoke.

I hoped by this to fool Big Foot into thinking that we actually were making camp.

As soon as the fire was smoking enough for the blue smoke to show above the masking spur of high ground, we back-

tracked along the way we had come, but kept well over to the right so that we stayed hidden by the high ground.

We soon reached the trail that branched from the main one. Turning up it, I saw that my guess had been a good one. The track climbed steeply until it was about halfway up the range of hills on the south side of the valley. It then levelled out and remained flat and parallel to the floor of the valley.

Clint and I led the way and kept our eyes on the ground below us to our right. We still had to confirm that Big Foot Tokana was, in fact, waiting in ambush for us and that Snowdrop had actually scented the Indians when he refused to proceed.

A NEAR THING.

CLINT, of course, had no doubts at all that Snowdrop had had a good reason for stopping at the valley - mouth, and any I may have had were soon smashed.

It was when we were less than a mile from the entrance to the vale, that I spotted a group of seven horses behind a mass of chaparral. Monitoring for Clint to drop to the ground, I lowered myself behind a hummock, took off my battered stetson, and cautiously poked my head over the little rise in the ground.

I scanned the ground around the horses, and because of my high position, was soon able to see where the owners of the horses were hiding. They were ranged along the north side of the valley, in among the rocks. They were well hidden and I caught only odd glimpses of them.

"See if yuh can spot Tokana, Johnny," growled Clint. "If yuh do, we'll slap a slug into him for them three guys he murdered back along the trail."

I scanned the hiding-places

of the would-be ambushers, but at first could not spot Tokana. Presently, however, I saw a huge foot move out from behind a big boulder and the man who owned it shifted his position.

Since only Tokana wore moccasins as big as canoes, I knew the foot belonged to him. I pointed out the bandit leader's moccasins to Clint, and both of us waited patiently for the massive Indian to show enough of himself for us to plant slugs into him.

We had no qualms at all about what we hoped to do. Tokana was a ruthless and cruel murderer and the world would be a better place without him.

We waited with growing impatience for more than an hour, but Tokana must have been sleeping behind his rock, for although we could see his enormous foot, he showed no more of himself.

As it was getting dark, I decided to wait no longer.

"Draw a bead on that foot, Clint, an' so will I," I said. "If we can hit it, Tokana might show himself enough for us to hit him again."

Big though Tokana's foot was, it made only a small target from where we were. I sighted carefully on it and Clint followed suit. Our rifles cracked almost at the same time.

Tokana quickly moved his leg back, but did not jump up as we had hoped. He was too wily for that and, instead, kept himself well hidden so that we could see nothing at all of him.

As the second shot winged him anyway, I I commenced to Clint, who nodded agreement.

Some of the Washoes loosed off at us with their muskets, but none of the slugs came near us.

"We'll be on our way now," I declared. If they try to follow, we'll be able to spot 'em easily from up here."

Clint went back for the mules and led them along the track, keeping them well back from the edge so that they could not be seen by Tokana and his men. I kept my eye on the enemy, but they stuck tight to their rocks, being afraid to show themselves while we looked down upon them.

I let Clint get a good start with the mule-string before I took another step. I kept looking back as I went, but the Washoes must have had enough sense for the time being, since they did not follow. Maybe Tokana didn't feel much like travelling, with a slug in one of his big feet.

We camped eventually and were not disturbed during the night. On the following day, we broke out of the Sierra Nevada and from then on it was plain sailing to San Francisco.

As we struck across a flat plain, making good time, I was already trying to figure out how much profit I should make on my next trip to Virginia City.

—★—

Next week Johnny Stark makes a bad enemy—the West's most vicious killer!

STAMP COLLECTORS

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MISCELLANEOUS

MATCHBOX Labels—50 assorted, 2/3; 50 Belgium, 2/8; Approvals, Linton Labels, 14/7. Benistant Avenue, Elm Park, Horechurch, Essex.

BE TALLER! My height is 6'3"!! I can gain 1 lb. in 10 minutes. Rose system gets results. Write, Dept. 109, E. M. ROSS, Health Specialist, BOMBEYS, LONDON, W.C.1.

SMILER'S PRIZE PAGE

Smiler wants your jokes, riddles, handy hints, brain-teasing catches and any other items that would interest "Adventure" readers. If your entry is printed, you receive your choice of one of the six smashing prizes mentioned on this page. Write your entry on a postcard stating the prize you prefer, and send it off to:—

SMILER'S PAGE,
"ADVENTURE,"
12 FETTER LANE,
FLEET STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4.



Salesman—"Gentlemen, this is the only hair dressing that keeps your hair in place for weeks!"

Onlooker—"What's it called?"

Salesman—"Glue!"

—Shoot Football Game to S. N. Madsen, 121 Eastfield Road, Hull, E. Yorks.



—Wallet to B. Smith, 9 Bournville Road, London, S.E.6.

Tell your friend to stand against a wall with his shoulder, wrist, knee and foot touching it. Then tell him to take away the outside foot. He will find it is impossible to do so and, still keep the same places touching.

—Shoot Football Game to J. B. Wake, 162 St Helena Road, Rainford, Lancs.

What is the length of a small piece of string? Twice the half of it.

—Penknife to D. McCallum, 6 Hillside Road, Campbelltown, Argyll.

Jeweller—"This watch will last a lifetime."

Tommy—"Ridiculous. I can see for myself that its hours are numbered!"

—Shoot Football Game to R. White, Edenderry, Banbridge, Co. Down.

You have 12 tennis balls and some scales but no weights. One tennis ball is heavier than the others. How would you find which was the heavy one with only three weighings?

One left.
If the balance, the heavier one is the heavier for again and weight two of them.
Divided into 2 lots of 6.
Weigh the heavier one.
Divided into 2 lots of 3.
Weigh the heavier one.
Divided into 2 lots of 1.
Weigh the heavier one.

Uncle—"How are your boys getting on at school?"

Reggie—"I'm first in history."

Uncle—"And you, George?"

George—"I'm first in the street when it's time to go home!"

—Three Colour Signalling Torch to J. K. Ashworth, 79 Irene Avenue, N. Lancing, Sussex.

A hunter left his camp and walked five miles due south. At that point he shot a bear. He then walked five miles due west and found he was the same distance from his camp as when he shot the bear. What colour was the bear?

The only place where the hunter shot the bear was at the North Pole. The only place where the hunter shot the bear was at the North Pole.

—Postal Order to B. Fitzjohn, 13 The Hamm, Lds., near Exeter, Devon.

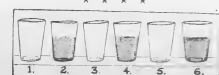
Cyril—"What is the helmet strap under your chin for?"

Policeman—"Oh, that's to rest my jaw when it gets tired answering stupid questions!"

—Wallet to M. Westland, 35d Helbourne Street, Glasgow, N. W.

Which river runs between two seas? The Thames, because it runs through Battersea and Chelsea.

—Penknife to R. Newnham, 39 Maguire Drive, Ham, Richmond, Surrey.



Place six jars in the above order, then, by moving one jar only, make it so that there are three empty jars on one side and three full jars on the other side.

—Three-Colour Signalling Torch to T. Montgomery, 3 Newline, Ballygigan, Killiney, Co. Down.

Simpson—"But to look at my car, you honestly wouldn't think that I bought it second-hand would you?"

Smith—"No, I thought you had made it yourself!"

—Penknife to A. Higgins, 6 Denton Close, Rushden, Northamptonshire.

This is a useful hint if you have a pen that blots. When it has dried, damp the blot with water then dip a wooden meat skewer in bleach. Roll the skewer over the now damp ink and the blot will then disappear.

—Shoot Football Game to G. Thomas, 11 Grove, Leeds, 12, Yorks.

PRIZES YOU CAN WIN

An entry of yours appearing on this page earns you your choice of one of these prizes—

SHOOT FOOTBALL GAME — WALLET — PENKNIFE — BOX OF TRICKS — THREE-COLOUR SIGNALLING TORCH — POSTAL ORDER.

What rises, falls and wears out boots, yet cannot walk?

A football!

—Penknife to K. Eyre, 201 Burley Spa Lane, Hackenthorpe, near Sheffield.

Ask your friend to make any statement—but if he tells a lie he must hang, and if he tells the truth he will be shot. He will say that it would be impossible to save himself, but the only statement that would keep him alive is—"I will die by hanging." If he tells the truth he must be shot but this statement becomes a lie and he must hang but it then becomes the truth, and so on.

—Postal Order to D. Fellitt, 12 Salton Close, Littleport, Cambs.

Bill—"What do you think of my diamond tie-pin?"

Ian—"It's all right, but it's not a real diamond."

Bill—"Isn't it? Then, by jingo, I've been swindled out of ninepence!"

—Shoot Football Game to G. Wade, 100 Second Avenue, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham.

If a cotton reel is an inch in diameter, the cotton is one-hundredth of an inch thick, what is the simplest way of finding out how much cotton can be wound on the reel?

—Shoot Football Game to M. Willis, 87a Elm Grove, Southsea, Hants.



—Box of Tricks to D. Hewitt, 21 Springfield Road, Mafpos, Cheshire.

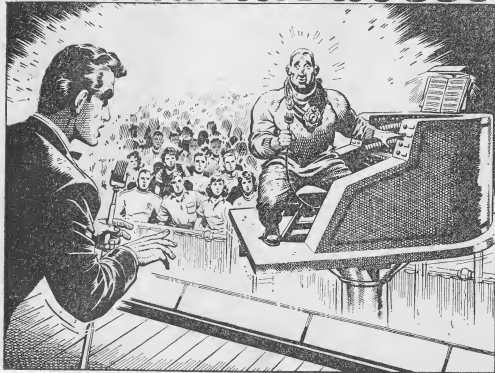
Exasperated Father—"Right, Tommy, I'll let you ask one more question."

Tommy—"Well, Dad, when a doctor takes ill and another doctor doctors him, does the doctor doing the doctoring have to doctor the doctor the way the doctor being doctor'd wants to be doctor'd, or does the doctor doing the doctoring of the doctor, doctor the doctor in his own way?"

—Postal Order to G. O. Chandler, 47 Shelford Road, Trumpington, Cambridge.

Nightingale was in the right place to do his singing act—until he pressed the wrong button on the cinema organ!

NIGHTINGALE NOBBS



RING REST.

"STIR your stumps, Nobbs! Get off your knees! Show a leg there!"

Howls rose from the crowd packed into the Winter Gardens at Weston-super-Mare. Belows of encouragement reached the ears of the man on the canvas.

Nightingale Nobbs merely grinned and relaxed. He was taking it easy for a spell.

Nightingale had had a hard day. After a night and most of a day in jail, a wrestling bout with a large policeman, and a hundred mile whirl in a fast sports car, Nightingale Nobbs was appearing in the Weston Winter Gardens.

The occasion was a fight for the title of heavy-weight champion of the West, one more stage to the title of heavy-weight champion of Britain, then the world. Nightingale Nobbs was ambitious.

He was also ugly. The squat wrestler was reckoned to be the ugliest man in Britain. Not much over five feet, Nobbs was about as broad as he was tall, with extra-long arms to compensate for his short legs. His red hair was so close-cropped that it looked like a field of stubble.

The man who was trying to pin Nobbs to the canvas was the biggest of the only person in the big hall who knew that Nobbs was having a bit of fun.

Stan Britton, of Glastonbury, sweated in vain to put both Nightingale's shoulders on the floor of the ring, while the referee, on his knees, kept starting the count of three that would result in the first fall

being credited to Britton.

"One—two—" began the shoulders of the stocky scrapper twitched and rose from the canvas, in spite of everything Britton tried.

The Glastonbury man panted and forced the shoulder back down—but the other shoulder promptly twitched up at the count of "One."

The wrestling fans howled for action.

In the end, they got it. The Glastonbury man, furious at being unable to pin both Nightingale's shoulders to the deck for a fall, suddenly brought up a knee and ground it into the squat wrestler's stomach.

It was on the referee's blind side, so the ref. knew nothing about the foul till he noticed Britton zooming past his right ear. Astonished, the referee watched as the Glastonbury wrestler made a forced landing in the fourth row.

At that instant the bell went for the end of the round, and Britton's seconds flew to give him first aid.

"You want to watch that guy, ref.," growled Nightingale in his rusty voice. "He tried to upset my steak-and-chips. I had to be firm with him!"

BELT FOR A BELTING.

A TALL, very elegant young man approached the ring. On his handsome face was a slight frown. Kevin Barry was just a shade worried.

"Make it sharp, Nobbsy, old boy," he urged. "We have to

get round to the Paramount Theatre in about ten minutes for our show. There are nearly two thousand teenagers yelling for rock!"

The situation was rather strange. Kevin Barry was rapidly making a name as a red-hot rock 'n' roll singer who could handle calypso, skiffle, and sentimental ballads with equal ease.

Kevin was tall, dark-haired, very handsome, slim, and elegant. The teenagers loved him.

Although the eighteen-year-old Liverpool boy looked good, he could not sing a note. The singing was actually done by Nightingale Nobbs, professional wrestler and super crooner!

Mr Scott Lettis, a concert promoter, had worked out a scheme whereby Kevin Barry "mimed" the words, while Nobbs stayed out of sight and did the singing.

Just to make things difficult, Nightingale was under contract to Nick Skelton, a fat and cunning wrestling promoter. By arranging Kevin Barry concerts wherever Nobbs was to wrestle, Scott Lettis had so far managed to make his stunt work.

Now the Paramount Theatre in Weston was packed to hear Kevin Barry, while Nightingale Nobbs still scrapped on in the Winter Gardens, a quarter of a mile away.

Stan Britton came out of his corner, still shaky from his fall, but furiously determined to fix Nobbs properly. The Glastonbury wrestler raced over the ring and began to belt into Nightingale with forearm smashes.

Suddenly Nobbs shot out a powerful hand and grabbed the arm that was doing the smashing. He twisted—and Stan Britton howled in pain before he cartwheeled across the ring into the far post.

The Glastonbury man rose shakily, and just as he reached the vertical position, he became aware that Nobbs was coming at him.

The squat man had backed against the ropes, then launched himself like a torpedo for the middle of the Glastonbury wrestler. Before Britton could move, Nightingale's heels took him in the chest, and he shot back with tremendous force against the rope.

The rope twanged and parted, unable to stand the strain. Britton, in the shape of a hair-pin, was wedged between the first two rows of seats. He was very, very unconscious. The ambulance men were on their way before the referee declared Nobbs to be the new West of England heavy-weight wrestling champion.

To tremendous applause, Nobbs shambled from the ring, and was given a very fancy belt which was a sign of the champion.

A roar of laughter went up, for the belt was at least a foot too short to fit round Nightingale's waist. Cheers and cat-calls shook the roof as Nobbs draped the belt round his neck and bowed to the mayor before scuttling to his dressing-room.

A taxi was waiting, and a few minutes afterwards Nobbs and Kevin Barry dived into the Paramount Theatre. The Paramount was generally used as a picture house, but that night it held one of the Scott Lettis Rock 'n' Roll Shows, complete with a well-known Bristol band and a few singers.

"What kept you?" hissed Scott Lettis, as his two stars hustled in. "The band are on their last number before your entry, Kevin."

"Oh, never mind," grinned Kevin, looking at Nightingale, who had changed in the taxi and was now wearing a pair of tattered corduroy slacks and a repulsive red pullover. "Just get Nobbsy under cover, and let's get on with the show."

"Come on then, Nightingale," shrugged Scott Lettis. "I've got the very place for you."

BUTTON BLUNDER.

THE promoter led the stocky wrestler down a dusty passage, then opened a small door.

Nightingale Nobbs blinked. He was not in his usual grubby spot under the stage or in the wings, but seemed to be right in the hall.

The Big Beat of the Henry Littlejohn Band boomed in his ears, and the clapping of the fans as they clapped on the down-beat sounded very close.

This was the organ-pit, said Lettis, and Nightingale

Soldier ants can cross fire and water.

then spotted the shrouded cinema organ. Lettiss twitched the cover off, and Nobbs grinned as he lowered himself out to the long shiny seat.

"You can sit here in perfect safety and comfort," declared Lettiss. "That's the microphone phone there. Just switch on before each song, and do your stuff. No one will see you."

"This is a swell set-up," approved Nightingale, gazing with immense interest at the mass of controls on the organ. "I ain't been so comfortable for a concert before."

At that second, a tiny bulb, built glowing beside the organ, lit. That's the signal, Scott indicated the bulb.

"Here we go then," grinned Nobbs, flicking the microphone switch as Kevin Barry appeared on stage to the music of the big Bristol band especially hired for the occasion.

Kevin came down to the footlights, and a ripple of polite applause came from the audience. In the South-West of England, Kevin Barry was still only a name.

As soon as Kevin started—apparently—to sing, the fans realised they were hearing something good.

Nightingale Nobbs, in the organ pit, really let fly. He had never felt so good, and he gave it to "Cheddar Gorge Rock" just about every ounce of pep he possessed.

"Take me back to the spot where the tall cliffs soar, Where the cavemen heard the dinosaur's roar.

Fill me full of cheese and Somerset cream, Then I'll go, men, go, and you'll hear me scream! I gotta dig it, I gotta dig it! I gotta dig these long-lost caves tonight!"

Everyone in the audience had visited the famous Cheddar caves, only ten miles from Weston-super-Mare. They grinned as Nightingale ripped into the second verse.

Down in the organ pit, dressed in his battered pullover, with his wrestling belt still draped round his neck, Nightingale Nobbs really went to town. The third verse ended to a perfect gale of applause.

Kevin Barry, thanks to Nightingale's voice, was a smash-hit.

Nightingale switched over, to flick the microphone switch to "Off," but failed to notice that as he did so, his foot pressed one of the buttons at the base of the organ.

Suddenly Nobbs felt himself going up in the world. The organ was climbing into full view of the audience.

On the stage, Kevin Barry saw his ugly pal soar into the spotlights, and he nearly died. At once, he guessed what had happened.

Nightingale had pressed, by accident, the switch controlling the organ-lift. When a cinema-organist played, he did so in full view of the audience, by pressing the switch which caused a hydraulic ram to lift the organ up.

Kevin thought like lightning. He choked into the microphone.

The folks, some of you don't know this, but half an hour ago Nightingale Nobbs won the South-West wrestling title. Nobbs is also a talented organist. Hear him now as we give you an old number,

"Organ-Grinder's Swing." The crowd clapped wildly, and Nobbs raked in his memory for the words of the old popular song. Meanwhile Kevin had left the front of the stage, apparently to have a casual word with the band-leader.

"Tell your electric-organ wallah to belt it out," muttered Kevin. "This is all a gag. Play along with it. Publicity, you know!"

The Bristol band-leader nodded, and soon the "Organ-Grinder's Swing" was belting into the Paramount.

The organ microphone was on the music-stand, so Nobbs was facing away from the audience, as he sang and pretended to play the organ. It was a moment for panic, but Nightingale got away with it.

In the applause that followed, Nightingale was able to find the knob and press it again. Slowly, the organ sank from sight, and Nightingale finished his programme in the dimness of the organ away with it.

After Kevin had left the stage and the show ended, Nightingale made his way to the dressing-rooms that were back-stage.

He found Scott Lettiss lying on a couch, as white as a sheet, while Kevin tried to bring the little promoter round.

"The shock of seeing you soaring into the air was too much for him," chortled Barry.

SIMPLE SET-UP.

"HERE'S the scheme, then," declared Scott Lettiss.

The small, worried-looking concert promoter had recovered from the shock of seeing his underling, Kevin, appearing before the public, and he was now addressing his troops in the beautiful town of Newquay, in Cornwall.

"Nightingale is wrestling—and Kevin is singing—in the same place, at the same night," continued Scott Lettiss.

He enjoyed the sensation his statement caused.

"How on earth did you work that, Scott?" gasped Kevin.

"Well, the wrestling match is taking place at a spot called the 'Smugglers' Inn,'" explained Lettiss. "It actually is an inn, too, but it has a large hall built on to it, and the proprietor of the inn puts on wrestling shows and concerts. I've seen a scion of the nobility agreed to work a double act with us, dividing the profits."

"Great stuff!" exclaimed Kevin admiringly. "I've heard of this place. It's a few miles from Newquay, isn't it?"

"Yes, about six miles out,

and built right on the coast, on the cliffs above a cove," nodded Scott Lettiss. "It's quite a spot."

Two hours later the V.R.A., a rakish red sports car owned by Kevin Barry, screamed out to the Smugglers' Inn, about an hour before the show was due to begin.

The Smugglers' Inn was an amazing spot. Old, and rambling, it had been modernised in a skilful manner, and the large hall added at one side. Part of the building stood right at the edge of a three hundred foot cliff, plunging sheer into the Atlantic Ocean.

The two oddly-assorted pals, Nightingale and Kevin, went into the Inn, and found Nick Skelton, chewing a cigar as usual, talking to a red-faced man with rather cunning, shifty eyes.

"Hi, boys," beamed Skelton, waving his cigar. "Go on through, and the nitwit will show you around."

Nobbs and Barry ignored this insulting reference to Scott Lettiss, and moved through to the back of the inn.

A wrestling ring had been fixed in the centre of the hall, and seats were arranged round it, facing a stage at the far end.

"First," explained Lettiss, "Nobbs does his stuff against the Cornish wrestler, then there's a twenty-minute interval, during which they take the ring away and re-arrange the seats. That gives the customers time to spend money in other parts of the Inn."

"Does Kevin Nobbs a chance to get under the stage," guessed Kevin Barry.

"Right," nodded Lettiss. "There are cellars under the stage, and we've led a microphone down, with a pair of play-back headphones so that Nightingale will know what's going on. You, Kevin, do your stuff on the stage."

"Sounds a simple set-up," mused Nobbs. "Money for jam, I guess."

LONG-RANGE WRESTLING.

THE Smugglers' Inn was packed. Well over five hundred people had jammed into the hall behind the inn, at 7s 6d each.

Both Skelton and Lettiss were rubbing their hands, as was the red-faced man with the shifty eyes, who turned out to be the owner of the place.

At eight o'clock, Nightingale Nobbs entered the ring, and looked with interest at the Cornish Lizard. Though he had taken on several Cornishmen in his career, Nobbs had never encountered the Lizard before.

He was not a giant, but the Lizard was dressed entirely in a one-piece black costume, covering him from neck to ankles, was nearly as broad as Nightingale. He bulged with muscle.

"If I let that monkey get a real stranglehold," Nobbs told

Kevin, who was acting as his second, "he might do me an injury. I'm going to keep out of his way and fight at long range."

"For Pete's sake, Nobbs," chortled Kevin. "Who ever heard of a long-range wrestler? This I must see!"

The bell sounded, and the Cornish Lizard shambled from his corner, arms outstretched.

Nightingale Nobbs promptly flew out of his corner, grabbed one of the extended hands, pivoted and twisted sharply.

A howl escaped the tight lips of the Lizard, then he cartwheeled violently across the ring, ending up in a heap against the ropes.

Nightingale stood back, then as the Lizard tottered to his feet, Nobbs zipped in and kicked him savagely with his instep, a move permissible under the rules, on the right thigh.

The Lizard's leg doubled under him, and he fell heavily.

Nobbs came flying in as the Lizard staggered to his feet, and his opponent ducked. Nightingale promptly zoomed into the air, came down on the Lizard's shoulders, wrapped his legs round the Cornishman's chest, and levered backwards.

The Lizard fell forward on his face, and as Nobbs threw his leg back, jerking at his opponent's neck, the Cornish wrestler yelled his submission. "First fall to Nobbs!" bawled the referee.

"So that's long-distance wrestling!" exclaimed Kevin Barry, gaping at the shattered Lizard.

The second round drove the Smugglers' Inn audience frantic with excitement. Twice, the Lizard nearly caught the daring Nobbs, while Nobbs battered the Cornishman round the ring with drop-kicks, forearm smashes, chops, and instep-kicks to the muscles.

The Lizard stuck it till the middle of the third round, then he suddenly caved in. He had just taken a sharp smack in the kidneys, when he decided to lie down. The referee counted him out, and Nobbs left the ring to the cheers of the crowd. "Sure was a whirlwind scrap that," chortled Kevin. "Now you'd better get dressed and go down into the cellars."

SECRET PASSAGE.

AN hour later Nightingale Nobbs was in full song.

With his earphones on so that he could hear the band, and a microphone in his hand, he was belting out "Land's End Lullaby."

Up in the hall, on the stage, Kevin mouthed merrily away.

"When you hear the thunder of mighty waves, And the ocean liners go gliding by

When the winds blow hard and the sea-mew roves, You're hearing the Land's End Lullaby.

When photographers try to snap your face,

And the charabanc's engine
tears the sky,
When you're sucking ice-
lollies all over the place,
You're hearing the Land's
End Lullaby."

Suddenly two strong arms
clamped round Nightingale
Nobbs. He felt himself dragged
backward by a terrific force.

In the hall, just as he opened
his mouth for the third verse
of "Land's End Lullaby,"
Kevin Barry heard a gasp
through the speakers. There
was a scraping sound and some
panting, then there came a
tiny click.

Something's going on down
in the cellars, thought Kevin.

Quick as a flash he stepped
forward, right to the edge of
the platform, and held up his
hand.

"Sorry folks, there's a
temporary fault in the micro-
phone system," said Kevin
smoothly. "It will be put
right in about ten minutes, so
why don't you treat yourself
to another interval."

Kevin dived for the door
leading down to the cellars. It
was locked!

The tall eighteen-year-old
youth from Liverpool looked
round, and spotted firefighting
equipment hanging on the wall.
He grabbed an axe, and crashed
through the door in four hefty
swings.

As an after-thought, before
he went into the cellars, Kevin
snatched an extinguisher and
a rubber torch.

The dark-haired lad zipped
down the stairs, and into the
cellar where Nobbs had been
performing. All that was left
was the orange-box on which
Nobbs had been sitting, and
the microphone lying in a
corner.

But the beam of the torch,
cutting into the dark corners of
the cellar, showed a square of
blackness at the far end. Kevin
went up to it.

An opening about half the
size of a door led to a stone-
lined passage—and the roar of
the sea came clearly to Kevin's
ears as he pressed on.

Suddenly Kevin came to the
end of the passage, and found
himself staring at the creamy
surf, hundreds of feet below.

The Liverpool lad, as his
eyes grew used to the night
light, saw that he was about
twenty feet down from the top
of the cliff—and a tiny path
zig-zagged away in the darkness
to his left.

It was no spot for a person
afraid of heights, but Kevin cat-
footed on, down and down,
till he rounded a corner. Finally
he stopped, gaping.

He was in the cove at the foot
of the cliffs, and he was not
alone. Three men were grouped
round a motor-boat which
seemed to have run through the
surf into the quieter waters of
the tiny bay. Barrels lay on
the sand—and a dark shape lay
beside them.

"Nobbs!" thought Kevin.
The Liverpool youth darted

forward, and as he did so, one
of the men turned. In the faint
light, Kevin recognised him.
It was the Cornish Lizard!

As the Lizard moved forward
menacingly, Kevin smashed the
end of the extinguisher on the
nearest barrel, then directed
the jet of chemical straight at
the Lizard.

SMUGGLERS OUTSMARTED.

JUST at that point, shouts
came from the cliff.
Immediately the other
two men dived for the
motor-boat, jumped in,
and raced from the cove.

"They won't get far,"
growled a burly man, arriving
beside Kevin. "It's that
rascally owner of the Smugglers'
Inn and his brother. I've sus-
pected them for a long time of
bringing in brandy. Now,
thanks to you, I've found out
how it was done."

Barry was delighted to see
that his squat pal, though tired
and gagged, and with a lump
like an egg on his brow, was
conscious and raring to go.
Nightingale's twinkling eyes
gleamed as Kevin cut him free.
Nightingale Nobbs struggled
to his feet, and weaved over to
where the Cornish Lizard was
still howling and rubbing his
eyes.

"You gave me trouble after
all, brother," gritted Nobbs.
"But you had to do it from
behind. Now you need a spot

of sleep."

Nightingale Nobbs then did
something strictly illegal for a
wrestler. He plastered a right
hook straight on to the Cornish
Lizard's chin. Instantly the
muscle-man folded to the sand,
out for a very long count.

Later, when everyone had
returned to the Smugglers'
Inn, the burly man, who turned
out to be the local Chief Coast-
guard, explained the set-up
to Scott, Kevin, and Nobbs.

"We've known that smuggl-
ing was taking place, and we've
suspected the inn," he ex-
plained. "But we did not
suspect that cove, for we thought
no one could get down to it.
The secret passage wasn't
known."

"And the proprietor was
behind the whole thing?"
gasped Scott Lettis. "He had a
nerve, smuggling brandy on the
very night he was running a
wrestling show and concert."

"That was his safest night,
I reckon," smiled the coast-
guard. "He used to send us
tickets, and we fell for the
stunt. With us safely inside, he
could signal his motor-boat to
come into the cove and un-
load. But, thanks to your
young friends, we've rounded
up the whole gang."

—★—

Nightingale finds an audience that
isn't afraid of him next Tuesday—
he sings for a bunch of Dartmoor
convicts!

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on the door of your room when you're busy
playing indoors on wet days.



LANKY'S SPOT for SPORTS



Nightingale Nobbs' sport is in the news today, lads. But the wrestler I want to write about is not a heavy-weight. George Kidd is the name, and he is the light-weight wrestling champion of the world. Determination brought George Kidd his championship crown—determination to prove that he was a world beater, even though the experts thought that he was—

TOO SMALL TO WRESTLE!

WHEN George Kidd was a small boy in his native city of Dundee, Scotland, he decided to pay a visit to a boxing club.

George was small for his age and he ended up by going home with a bleeding nose. But, that day, he decided that he was going to be a fighter. He began to do exercises, and read as many books on wrestling and Yogi as he could lay hands on. Soon his muscles began to develop, but his height was not as great as George would have liked. Still, he was proud of his expanding muscles, and, if he was not to be a heavy-weight, well, it couldn't be helped!

In 1943, George joined the Navy, but he did not let the war interfere with his body-building exercises. The Navy gave George a chance to use

Morell was not very impressed by his visitor. The Scot was too small to be a wrestler, but he was certainly determined! After Morell had argued himself blue in the face, he decided that actions would show better than words that George was not cut out to be a wrestler.

The ex-champion took his visitor round to a gymnasium and both men stripped for action. On the mat, Morell used all the locks and throws which caused the most pain, every minute expecting that George Kidd would change his mind. But the young man fought until he could no longer stand—and Morell had a new pupil!

For the next two years Morell taught George Kidd all the tricks of the game, then decided that his pupil was ready to meet all comers. That same



his muscles in a branch of sport which he had not tried seriously before—wrestling.

The young Scot found that wrestling gave him the thrill that other sportsmen get from skiing or motor-racing, and he determined to become a professional wrestler after the war.

George knew that the best man to start him on the road to championship honours was Norman Morell, an ex-European wrestling champion and a famous match-maker. In 1946, George called at Morell's house in Bradford and told the Englishman that he wanted to be a wrestler.

year he beat Joe Reid, the British champion, but Jack Dempsey of Wigan later won the championship from Reid.

After defeating Reid, and winning the British honours, George looked for an international bout. In 1949, he went after the European title—and won it in Paris that same year!

A European title fight led to a world title fight, and George was matched with Rudy Quarez, the Mexican world light-weight champion. Once more the man who was too small to be a wrestler proved the experts wrong by becoming world champion.

I WAS THERE

In the summer of 1956, I watched the European Grand Prix, which was run alongside the famous Grand National course at Aintree. The competitors included famous drivers like Stirling Moss, Juan Fangio, Mike Hawthorn and many others. Moss, driving a Vanwall, had done the fastest practice lap, and therefore held the No. 1 starting position. Straight from the start, Moss took the lead, because of the Vanwall's greater acceleration, but, soon after, he struggled into the pits with clutch trouble, and seemed to be out of the race. However, he was soon back on the track, driving another Vanwall. Moss was now well behind the leaders, but by superlative driving he caught up. Fangio dropped out with engine trouble, and Moss passed Hawthorn, and held his lead to the finish to win the European Grand Prix.



7 Vaux Crescent, Bootle, Liverpool, 20, is the address on the prize package on its way to T. Rooney. Reader Rooney has won himself a MATCH FOOTBALL prize for his report on the Grand Prix, and YOU can also win a prize! Here's how. Write a report about a famous sporting occasion which you remember, ask your teacher to sign your letter, then send it to the address at the foot of the page. If your report is printed, you win a prize!

FOOTBALL FLASHES

Quite a few good Scottish players are transferred to wealthier English clubs, but another country has its eye on Scottish talent. Willie Connolly, of Falkirk and Arbroath, signed for the American club, Brookhattan Galacia, and proved such a success that he was capped for the United States. The natural sequel is that Galacia are now looking for more Scots lads of the same calibre.

This has not been a happy season for many Scottish First and Second Division team defenders. Until the 3rd of January, there had been 48 own-goals scored in these two leagues.

What would you think if, entering the dressing-room of a senior English club before a game, you saw ten of the players resting and pulling the leg of the eleventh man. Well, that's exactly what happens with Sheffield United,

because the rest of the team has found out that left-back, Graham Shaw plays a stormer after such a session.

In the past few seasons, Leyton Orient and big money transfers have gone together. Their record is, Stan Charlton and Vic Groves transferred to Arsenal for £30,000; Tommy Johnston to Blackburn—£25,000; Ron Heckman to Millwall—£6000; Dave Lexton to Brighton—£6000, and this season Phil Woosnam moved to West Ham United for £30,000.

IT'S A FACT!

During a heavy weight boxing tournament held in America, Lemmy Clarke knocked out nine opponents in four days, and SIX OF THEM IN ONE NIGHT!

Paavo Nurmi, the Finnish long-distance runner, believed that meat was not good for athletes and DID NOT EAT ANY FOR 6 YEARS!

No. 43—PATO

The ball's picked up and thrown into the air, the object of the game being to throw the ball over the stands at each end of the pitch. The team which scores the most points scored at the end of the game is the winner.

ODD-SPORTS

David McGrail, of 11 Abbey Close, Lostock Estate, Salford, Lancs, has won himself a MATCH FOOTBALL prize for sending in this game's ODD SPORTS report. Here is what David has to say about this South American game.

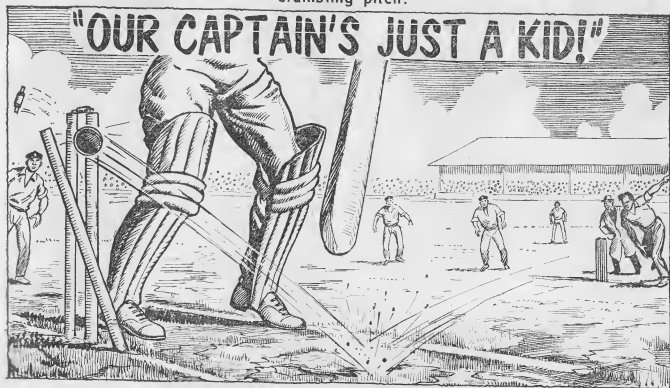


"Pato is like basketball game on horseback. The ball has handles attached, and furious tugs of war take place between the players. Each team has four players on horseback, the horses being very agile ponies, skilled in taking part in the game.



SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS—"LANKY'S SPOT FOR SPORTS" ADVENTURE, 12 FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

A Test match nightmare for England's batsmen — from an Aussie spin bowler on a crumbling pitch!



TENSE MATCH.

"NOTHING is impossible in cricket.

"If it was, England couldn't have won the first two Test Matches with a weakened team under a young and inexperienced captain, playing in his first Test."

Norman Hayes, the Australian cricket expert, was broadcasting a ball-by-ball description of the fourth Test Match, now being played in Adelaide.

"But Desmond White isn't inexperienced now. He seized every opportunity in Brisbane and Sydney, and if the M.C.C. men lost on a nightmare wicket in Melbourne, it wasn't his fault."

"The position now is, in the face of England's splendid first innings score of four hundred and seventy, Australia's overnight tally stands at one for eighty-four. If England can get a couple of cheap wickets, we might easily see Australia on the run and England batting again today."

The fourth Test Match was the main topic of conversation from Perth to Brisbane, from Darwin right down to Hobart. If England won, the "Ashes" were theirs. If they lost, it made the record two matches all, and the issue remained to be decided when the fifth and final Test was played in Sydney in a month's time.

"Everything," Hayes told an audience spread over the entire continent of Australia, "depends on the two batsmen now going out to resume their innings. Woodstock has no strokes worth mentioning, but he has more determination than any player I have ever met, and all the concentration of a cat watching a mouse hole.

"Australia's skipper, veteran John Warwick, is never better than when he has his back to the wall."

The Englishmen, filled with confidence, felt victory almost within their grasp. Des White thought so, too, but it seemed a little too good to be true.

Even the fact that he was captaining the side was a bit hard to believe. He would never have had the chance but for an unfortunate accident to the official captain, A. J. Maynard.

Even then his deputy, Nigel Harrison, should have taken over, but owing to eye strain Harrison's form was so bad that he insisted on standing down. As the sole remaining amateur, Des had found himself captain. Des had expected that one Test Match would be enough to finish his career as leader, but here was the fourth and he was still in command. What was more, it looked as if England would hold the Ashes before the week was out.

The familiar voice of Norman Hayes rang out in remote homesteads in the remote bush, in houses, in the cities and towns, in shops, offices and factories where the employees rushed away from their jobs to hear what was happening at the Adelaide Oval. And all day long, Australian hopes rose.

Two hundred and fifty up, and Warwick and his partner still in possession. Three hundred. In vain Des rang the changes in his bowlers, but none of them could break through. Now, minute by minute, the M.C.C. men felt victory slipping away.

There were, of course, some people in Australia who were not interested in the Test Match, and at least one who had never even heard of it.

That was not surprising, for Jimmy Chang Foo owned no radio set and never read a newspaper. Occasionally he had seen cricket being played on some bush paddock, but he had no idea what it was all about. Jimmy had come to Australia from China many years before. Having saved a little money, he went into business as a bush hawk. He owned a wagon and two powerful horses, of which he took great care, and spent his life travelling through the bush, going from farm to farm selling drapery and other odds and ends. The wagon was his bedroom, and his cooking was done on a camp fire.

But Jimmy was growing old. He wanted to go back to China to end his days, and he had decided to make this trip his last. As soon as the stock he had on board was sold, he would dispose of the wagon and horses, take the money he had carefully hidden in the vehicle, and return to the country he had left so long before and had never seen since.

Jimmy had various regular camping places. Usually he put up his wagon at one of the farmhouses at which he called. But sometimes when the stages were long, he pulled up in some convenient spot where water could be obtained. One of his stopping places was Leroy's Dam, a waterhole midway between the townships of Bordertown and Pingillo.

STICK-UP.

AT about five in the afternoon of this particular day, Jimmy decided to stop there for the night.

But when he drove his wagon through the trees he

was surprised to hear a man talking very loudly and confidently. Then he saw two youngsters men sprawled on the bank of the waterhole.

They had a billycan boiling on a small camp fire, and by their blanket rolls and other gear, were obviously swagmen, or trampers.

Their appearance would have made anyone else but Jimmy rather suspicious. Most swagmen are harmless men, generally getting on in years, and adorned with whiskers of various shapes and sizes.

This pair were different. They were clean-shaven and rather shifty-eyed, while, older still, they were listening to a portable wireless set, something no ordinary swagman was ever known to possess. It was from this radio that the talk was coming. Actually it was Norman Hayes, finishing his commentary on the day's cricket at Adelaide.

"Although no one would have given much for Australia's chances this morning," he was saying, "today has seen the game swing right away from England. At stumps, the Australian score was three wickets for four hundred and ten runs, which means that they are only sixty behind England, with seven wickets in hand."

One of the men leaned over and switched the radio off.

"It appears that the Pommies might take a toss, after all, Conkie," he stated. "But look who's here."

They both rose lazily and looked Jimmy over.

"Spare me days," grinned the man called Conkie. "It's a 'chow. How's it goin'?"

He smiled at Jimmy and invited him to save himself the trouble of making a fire by using theirs.

Carpets have been made from human hair.

POLICE MESSAGE.

OVER in Adelaide, the Englishmen, 135 behind on the first innings, were battling to make up the leeway.

"Ted and I have just been listenin' to the cricket," said Connie. "You likee cricket?"

"No savvy," answered Jimmy "Too muchee hard work."

They watched him go about the business of watering and feeding his horses, then invited him to share their billycan of tea.

They ate their meal before it grew dark, then Connie turned on the radio again.

Jimmy retired to his bed in the wagon as soon as it was dark, but the other pair lingered on by the fire. The night was hot, but the smoke kept the mosquitoes at bay.

"Nice old Chink, that," remarked Ted. "Shouldn't be surprised if he had a few pounds in that wagon of his."

"You're dead right," agreed Connie. "It wouldn't be hard to get, either."

He glanced meaningfully towards the wagon. Ted shook his head.

"Not here," he argued. "There are always travellers pulling in at a good waterhole like this. It would be very awkward if someone showed up while we were on the job. I'll think it over. You leave it to me, Connie—don't forget I'm the brains of this outfit."

By morning, Ted had considered the problem.

"What about giving us a lift along the road, Jimmy?" he asked.

The obnoxious old Chinaman readily agreed. The two crows threw their swag into the wagon and climbed up beside him. Progress was slow as Jimmy never let his horses move faster than a walk, but towards mid-day they were approaching the scrub country.

"About time the cricket started again," muttered Ted, and switched on the radio, so that they proceeded through the bush accompanied by the voice of Norman Hayes.

"With the Australian score at three for four hundred and ten, Warwick and Carson are returning to the bowling of Hatwood and Burns."

It was one of those innings which never seem to come to an end, only known where cricket is played without a time limit. Warwick went on to make another fifty, and every man had to be dug out. But at last it was over, although not until Australia had put up the mammoth total of 605.

By that time, Jimmy's wagon was rumbling along a track through the dense scrub. Suddenly Ted switched off the radio and leaned over to the old man.

"That's the place I'm looking for," he said, indicating the roof of a small hut showing up among the Mulga scrub. "Give me the reins, old boy."

"Waffor?" cried the startled Jimmy, as the reins were snatched from his grasp.

"Take it easy, old boy," replied Ted, "and you won't get hurt."

"Then someone told me about an old football trainer in Melbourne—a fellow named Combo Sanderson, an absolute expert on injuries of that kind. He fixed my knee in two visits. I'll give you his address. You see him as soon as you get to Melbourne!"

Next day the match went on, but the end was in sight although public interest was as great as ever, and the crowds that packed into the Adelaide Oval were as big as on the opening day.

Des White felt tired when he resumed, but his weariness vanished as soon as he felt the ball on the bat. After a couple of overs, he realised with a thrill that he had struck one of those rare days when nothing can go wrong, when the best bowlers seem easy, and the ball comes down looking as big as a water melon.

If White can get anyone to stay with him, Norman Hayes announced, "he's going to give Australia a task—"

"One moment. I've been asked to broadcast a police message. An elderly Chinese hawk named Jimmy Chang Foo is missing in the desert country near Bordertown. He left Red Lake in his wagon several days ago, and has not been seen since."

Jimmy is well-known in the area. Anyone knowing his whereabouts is requested to contact the nearest police office, as it is feared that he may have been taken ill. Now back

to the cricket. With the score at nine for two hundred and sixty-seven, England's last man, Burns, has just joined White."

Des White was playing the kind of innings that a cricketer remembers long after he has retired from the game. The bat seemed like a conjurer's wand, with which he directed the ball just where he wanted it.

But magnificently as Des batted, he could not play at both ends. Once, and the end came when West skilled Sammy Burns, leaving Des unconquered with 115, and the Australians with just over 200 to win.

There was still a chance for England, for the English bowlers, inspired by the hope of snatching a victory, sent them down like demons, and in the first hour dropped three wickets for 20 runs.

But it was a dying effort. Gradually the batting got on top again, and the two sides gathered when five wickets had fallen for 120, West and Turner knocked off the balance as coolly as if they had been well set in a Saturday afternoon club game.

Des came off the ground feeling a little disheartened. This would be the last time he would captain the side, and he would have given a lot to have led it to victory. Still, he had done his best, and not a bad bet, either.

"SHORT-CUT" EXPERT.

THERE were several more matches before the final Test.

The first two were unimportant, being provincial games at Ballarat and Bendigo.

Then came a fixture against Victoria, in Melbourne, followed by one against New South Wales, in Sydney. After that came the battle for the Ashes.

Maynard had a surprise for him when Des returned to the pavilion. Old Septimus Carey, a wealthy sheepowner they had met in Adelaide, was driving across to Victoria to inspect some property, and had invited Maynard, Harrison, and Des to travel in his car.

They started early next morning, leaving the other members of the side to follow on by train. Mr Carey had a fine car and was an excellent driver, but he had one weakness—he considered himself a greater authority on the overland route than the man who had drawn the road-maps.

He knew a number of places that he wished the cricketers to see, and he took what he called "short-cuts" to them all, although as far as Des could make out, they turned out to be rather roundabout routes.

When they were crossing the bridge over the Murray River, Mr Carey exclaimed in surprise and pointed out two men who came trudging along towards them, carrying blanket rolls on their backs and billycans in their hands.

(Continued on Page 23.)

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A Canadian schoolboy drops into danger—to get two trapped men out of danger!

OUT OF THE FLYING CAN INTO THE FIRE

FIRE DANGER.

NICKY PETERS felt a surge of anger when he saw the cigarette butt smouldering in the dry grass off the roadside.

He swung off his bicycle, kicked the butt out into the middle of the road and ground it under his heel.

"That's all we need," he muttered in disgust. "If some of these fools who throw cigarette butts out of passing cars could see the damage a forest fire does, perhaps they would be a bit more careful."

All around the boy, the forests lay brown and scorched after a month-long drought. Smouldering beneath a brassy sun in a cloudless sky, the timberland seemed about to burst into flame at any minute.

Nicky remounted his bicycle and settled down to the long pull up to the top of Mount Champlain. There he would spend this Saturday in July, on duty as a Junior Forest Ranger, working a shift on the lookout to relieve the regular man there.

Around a sharp bend in the road he came on a parked automobile with two men in gaudy sports togs lounging beside it. Both men were smoking cigarettes. Nicky coasted up and stopped beside them.

"I'll have to ask you not to smoke in here," He spoke respectfully, but firmly. "Forest regulations during the dry season, you know."

"I just stamped out a smoking cigarette butt further back on the road. I don't know whether one of you gentlemen threw it there; but it might have started a serious fire."

The bigger man of the two, red-faced and arrogant, removed the cigarette from his lips and sneered. His insolent gaze inspected Nicky from the toes of his blue sneakers to an unruly thatch of curly brown hair.

He saw a sturdy lad of fifteen, freckled and sun-tanned, dressed in a sleeveless khaki shirt and trousers of the same material.

"Who are you, kid?" the big man taunted. "A Boy Scout trying to do your good deed for the day?"

"Yes, I'm a Boy Scout, sir!" Nicky replied steadily. "And, I'm also a Junior Forest Ranger, trying to do my share to prevent a fire starting. The least you can do is to help me carry out my job."

"Maybe the kid's right, Benson." The second man spoke up in a ready voice. "We shouldn't smoke in here. The woods are mighty dry."

"Don't take it so seriously, Carter," Benson sneered.

SPECIAL COMPLETE STORY

"These country people are always squawking about forest fires. Anyway, who cares if a few trees do burn. There's millions more of 'em."

Nicky went back to his bike, tight-lipped. There was nothing to be gained by arguing further with these men. The bald man, Carter, could be made to see reason; but Benson was the typical loud mouth type that Nicky had met many times before.

Mounting up, Nicky pedalled off. He had memorised the

licence number of the men's car. Once he reached the lookout, he would telephone in a report. Mr Meynard, the Ranger, or one of his radio patrols would get Benson before he went very far.

Nicky had to put his bicycle into low gear to pedal up the last quarter mile of the steep road. A light Piper Cub aeroplane stood on the short runway beside the spidery steel framework of the lookout tower.

This was one of the patrol ships used by the Forest Rangers. Keith Tilley, the pilot, slid open one of the cockpit windows, and shouted a greeting to Nicky as the boy parked his bike.

"Hiya, lad! Did you bring any rain with you?"

Nicky paused with one foot on the ladder that led upward to the glass-domed lookout tower.

crossed. The weatherman holds out a faint hope that we may get rain within the next three days."

NICKY TAKES OVER.

NICKY'S first job was to phone Meynard, the Chief Ranger, giving his report on the two men in the car.

"Okay, lad!" Meynard said when Nicky finished. "We'll have those fellows out of here in a hurry."

"One of our radio trucks is up near the Cromwell Road right now. I think there's a Mountie cruiser car in that district, too. I'll radio them to close in on this fellow, Benson. Meantime, keep on your toes, Nicky. We're sitting on a powder-keg."

As Nicky cradled the phone

"I wish I could, Keith," He grinned. "But all I've got is a complaint about a smart-aleck city slicker down on the Cromwell Road, tossing cigarette butts around. He wouldn't listen to me, so I'll turn in a report to Mister Meynard."

"That's the way to do it, Nicky!" A grim note crept into the pilot's voice. "All it takes right now is one fool with a match..."

Nicky began to climb. Up, up, he went, arms and legs moving with a steady rhythm that carried him up the iron ladder to the dome. He swung up over

receiver, he heard the roar of the Piper Cub taking off. He went out to the catwalk and leaned on the railing to watch the trim little plane skim over the tree tops.

Perched sixty feet in the air, the lookout afforded him an unobstructed view of fifty miles in any direction. He narrowed his keen brown eyes against the sun's glare, searching the rolling forest land for the first tell-tale wisp of smoke, and the dreaded warning of a forest fire in the making.

Now and then, when something caught his attention, he focused powerful binoculars on the spot.

He knew how much depended on him as a fire lookout. Up and down the forest lands, Meynard's men were spread out like an army ready for battle, awaiting the assault of the enemy.

Nicky, and others like him, high in glass-domed lookouts, were the eyes of Meynard's army which, in turn, was linked by radio communication to Ranger Headquarters, where Meynard sat like a general, his maps spread out before him.

This modern system of fighting forest fires was a far cry from the old days. Then,



Tea was first used as a medicine.

disorganised groups tackled the raging fires with shovels, axes and cutters, cutting crude fire breaks and backfires, fighting a losing battle that resulted in the loss of millions of dollars in valuable timber.

Now, at the first warning, Meynard could hurl men and modern equipment against the fires and scourge. Spotter planes, with walkie-talkie sets would go into the front line, relay information back to headquarters so that Meynard could plot the course of the fire and rush in bulldozers and mobile water tanks to hard-pressed firefighters and thus bring the raging monster under control.

Meantime, spotter planes, like Keith Tilley's Piper Cub, would be in the air seeking out new fires that might have started from sparks.

Nicky re-entered the door and spent some time checking the weather gauges. It was a grim story he read on the instrument board. The temperature showed 100 and the humidity was 17 per cent—a most dangerous combination of weather conditions.

Nicky checked the direction finder on its revolving table and read off the bearings of an imaginary fire. There must be no mistake in reading the bearing.

A few degrees of error could send the fire-fighting crew on the wrong road along the network of highways that interlaced this section of the forest. Precious time would be lost, time that might well mean the difference between victory and disaster.

Nicky went out on the catwalk again and thoroughly inspected his area, using the powerful binoculars to double check. Off to the west he caught the glint of glass twinkling in the sunlight.

That would be the lookout tower on Eagle Rock, where another ranger kept a lookout, as each hour without rain increased the danger of a fire outbreak.

The sun burned down on his head with a pitiless glare. No breath of wind stirred the parched trees. Beneath the shimmering heat haze, the land lay hushed, waiting in suspense like Nicky Peters and the surrounding population of Cranston.

Then he saw it, a yellowish tinge to the blue haze well down the foot of a slope where a roadway wound through the hills. Nicky swung the glasses on the spot. Trees and rock leapt into sharp detail.

He felt his heart skip a beat. This was it! There was no mistaking the curl of smoke that rose into the air, as a bright tongue of flame licked up the trunk of a pine, and burst into a golden pillar.

INTO ACTION.

NICKY whirled and ran for the fire finder, fighting down a sudden rush of panic.

He swung the table of the fire finder. In spite of his efforts to control them, his hands shook. Speed was the thing now—speed and accuracy. He finally got the bearing on the fire, double checked it, then scooped up the phone.

"Yes!" Meynard's voice crackled in the receiver. "Mount Chamberlain here." Nicky snapped. "I got a smoke. Here's the bearing: I read it 213.45. Looks to be on the east slope of Lind Hill near Cutler's crossing."

"Good work, Nicky," Meynard acknowledged. "We're on our way."

Nicky hung up and went back to the catwalk to watch. There was nothing more he could do right now. The wheels had been set in motion.

From Ranger Headquarters, Meynard saw which his attack on the red scourge of the forest.

"And he's going to need every man he can get," Nicky muttered as he watched the fire spreading with incredible rapidity.

A thick pall of smoke now hung low over the forest to shut off Nicky's view.

A plane roared out of the smoke and glided in for a landing beside Nicky's lookout tower. This was an open-rocker. And it came with the Piper Cub for aerial inspection by Meynard. Painted on its side were the words "THE FLYING CAN," which was Tilley's nickname for his "kite."

The pilot, Tilley, and Jack Thomas, the Ranger, climbed out of the plane, and began to ascend the ladder to the lookout.

"We've got a big one on our hands," Keith commented as he climbed up beside Nicky.

"One of the worst I've ever seen," Thomas agreed. "I'll tell Meynard what it looks like from up here." He went inside, and Nicky heard him in a long conversation with headquarters.

You're to fly back with me, Nicky. Keith said. All civilian volunteer firefighters have been ordered out, and Meynard wants you back at headquarters. Here, you'd better pull on these flying overalls."

"Did they pick up that fellow Benson?" Nicky asked as he pulled the overalls on.

"No report on him had come in when I left headquarters," Keith replied. "But we've got his car number, thanks to you, and we can pick him and the other fellow up later for questioning."

"We're hoping everybody is off the woodland roads. I'm going to make an aerial inspection right now. I'll take you with me and deliver you to headquarters later."

Nicky, delighted with the opportunity for a fight over the fire. With Keith's help, he shortened some of the straps on the parachute and climbed awkwardly into the front seat. Keith wiggled into the rear seat and settled himself at the controls.

The engine caught instantly and Nicky felt the vibration as Keith opened the throttle. The pilot tapped Nicky on the shoulder and pointed to a pair of goggles hanging on the dash in front of the boy. Nicky nodded and put them on.

A short run, a lurch, then they were airborne. Keith flew along the rim of the smoke cloud, and Nicky had a view of tiny figures and machines moving in ghostly fashion through an inferno of smoke, sparks and flame.

By this time, the fire had spread across acres of timberland, raging unchecked. Blazing brands, carried on the wind, started hundreds of new fires to plague Meynard's hard-pressed little army.

On the white ribbon of road that led out of Cranston, he could see long lines of vehicles moving. The volunteers were on the march, every able-bodied man and boy who could swing an axe was rushing to the fight. These men and boys formed Meynard's second line troops.

His she-trucks, trained warden and fire fighters, were already in the front line, sooty-faced men battling a fiery demon that threatened to destroy them and their homes.

DEATH JUMP.

NICKY felt Keith's hand on his shoulder, and when he turned round, Keith pointed straight down.

Nicky leaned over the edge of the cockpit into the windstream and peered down through the trailing smoke. As Keith banked and circled, the boy finally caught sight of a car in the middle of a road. Beside it, two figures ran back and forth, waving their arms at the plane.

Keith went down to treetop height, and Nicky grunted his disgust as he recognised the gaudy sports togs of Benson and Carter.

There's the two men I reported to Mister Meynard," Nicky squirmed around in his seat and shouted the information to the pilot.

Keith nodded. "If they don't get the lead out of their feet, they'll be charred toasts mighty soon. That fire is closing in on them mighty fast!"

"The car must be broken down!" Nicky yelled back against the rush of wind and the roar of the motor. "But they could still make it on foot if they're quick!"

Keith nodded, climbed again, then went down to skim the trees, while Nicky leaned out and tried to gesture the two men to make haste along the road while the escape route lay open.

Every minute, the roaring flames closed the gap that much more. Soon, a wall of flame would close it off completely.

But the two men continued to dance up and down, waving their arms furiously. They had to be helped, or they would die there in their blind panic.

"I'm going down!" Nicky told the pilot. "We've got to help those fellows. They'll never get out by themselves."

Keith Tilley frowned. A rescue attempt would be a risky one, for Nicky could easily become trapped himself and die in the flames with the two city men.

"Okay," Tilley nodded permission. He had to make a split second decision in the matter, for the responsibility as senior man was his alone.

Tilley climbed, banked, and levelled off, bringing the whole benefit of long flying skill into the task of making the jump easier for Nicky. Meantime, the boy had checked the harness, the chute and the ripcord with the brass ring into which he now looped the fingers of his right hand.

Keith lay back, he crouched on his seat, feet doubled under him, eyes fixed on the pilot's face. When Tilley nodded, Nicky straightened his legs and dived outwards, and downwards, to clear the plane's tail assembly. Momentarily, he gripped him as he tumbled down into the smoke; then he found he was counting mechanically. At the count of ten, he yanked hard on the ripcord.

His descent was a short one, for Tilley had timed it neatly. Nicky crashed-landed in a tree that was already aflame at the base.

He smashed down through the branches. When he stopped falling, sprawled astride a thick limb, Nicky snatched out his knife and quickly cut himself free.

He jumped to the ground and beat a path through blazing brush to the road. The sound of the main fire was a frightening roar in his ears to spur him on, out on the dirt road, Nicky sprinted for the car and the two men.

There was no bluster left in Benson when Nicky reached him. The big man was almost blubbering with fright as the flames closed in. His companion, Carter, was white as a lip.

He caught Nicky's arm as the lad dashed up. "It was him! Benson started the fire. He threw a lighted match away, though I tried to warn him blubbered on, but Nicky shook off his grip.

"We got to get out of here, fast," he told both men. "What's the matter with the car? The road ahead will be open for another few minutes."

"The car's gone," Benson stammered. "I lost it." Nicky thrust the man aside and jerked open the door on the driver's side. Already the heat was blistering the paint on the vehicle, and the metal was hot to the touch.

Knife in hand, Nicky crawled in on the floor amid pedals and gear lever. He quickly found the two wires he wanted out of the maze of wiring behind the dashboard, cut them, scraped the ends with his knife blade and twisted them together.

Then he wiggled out, put the gear in neutral and pushed the starter button. The motor caught, roared into life as Nicky pressed the accelerator pedal.

"Let's go!" He motioned the dumbfounded Benson into the driver's seat, "and step on it!"

Benson needed no urging. He sent the car hurtling over the narrow road at racing speed. The fear of the fire was upon him and his eyes rolled with terror.

They did not get far. The heat was too much for the tyres. Almost together, they blew with loud bangs, and the car bumped around a bend in the road and ground to a stop before a blazing barrier.

A tree had caught fire and fallen across the road. Everywhere they looked, the trio saw a red wall of flames roaring down upon them. The escape route was closed.

Nicky pushed open the car door and slid out. Heat scorched him, sucked the breath from his lungs. It was like facing the open door of a furnace.

But there was still a loophole open, the old sawmill at the foot of Blind Hill. If they could reach that, Nicky figured, they had a slim hope of escaping alive from this inferno. He explained his plan to the two men in a few words.

"It's one chance in a million," he finished. "But, it's the only hope we've got. We've got to try it. We just can't sit here and be cooked alive."

RAIL-CAR RUSE.

NICKY led the rush along the edge of one of the fires. Because there was no other alternative open, the two men followed him.

With fire on either side of him now, Nicky crashed through the brush. All around him, the wild things shared his eagerness to escape the flames.

Lumbering moose surged past in wild flight. Bounding deer brushed him, all fear of humans lost in their desire to escape. Once Nicky saw a black bear tearing along in wild flight, its shaggy coat smouldering.

Overhead, through the branches, partridge, grouse and pheasants shot past like coloured rockets. Blinded by smoke, his hair scorched, Nicky stumbled on. His own life was at stake now. The safety of all three depended upon his luck.

He blotted out all landmarks, and he had to find his way by the sheer instinct of a trained woodsman. If he missed the old mill, ran past it, then all three of them were doomed.

He heaved the sigh of relief when he finally emerged on to a narrow gauge railway. He swung right, Benson and Carter pounding on his heels.

Soon, the smokestack and the outline of old buildings loomed up through the smoke. Nicky ran straight toward a string of flat cars that had once been used to haul lumber from the

mill to the main railroad, a distance of several miles through the forest.

Desperation lent the two men and the boy the strength of ten men as they uncoupled one of the flat cars and moved it along to the tune of rusty wheels shrieking their protest.

By this time, the buildings of the mill were ablaze, and the dried grass along the narrow railway flared up to scorch the legs of the three as they worked.

Nicky found old blankets in the bunkhouse and soaked them in a few inches of muddy water at the bottom of the well. Draping themselves in the dripping blankets, they started the car rolling, then jumped aboard and stretched out flat, the blankets over their heads.

Would it work? Nicky wondered as the car creaked along, gradually picking up speed. He knew the car ran down grade until it reached a shunting point near the main railway; but the hazards that lay between the mill and the main line were many.

He peeked out once, then hurriedly withdrew his head. The car was now racing through walls of flame, lurching in an alarming fashion as it continued to pick up speed on the rickety railway.

Breathing became a torture under the steaming blanket. Nicky felt his senses reeling. The fierce heat seemed to be drying up the very blood in his veins.

Then, suddenly, the flames were no more. Clean, sweet air rushed into Nicky's lungs. Dimly, he sensed the car slowing down.

He had no knowledge right then of the excitement he created amongst Meynard and his firefighters, as the flat car suddenly burst out of the blazing forest, scattering men from its path.

Nicky heard vague voices and felt himself being lifted from the flat-car, then he slipped off into deep, velvety darkness.

When he opened his eyes again, he was in a white-walled room, his nostrils filled with the smell of a hospital.

His hands were bandaged and he could feel more bandages on his back and legs. Though he could not feel it right then, he suspected all the hair on his head had been charred off. His face muscles felt tight and strained.

By twisting his head, he could see Benson hunched up on the bed to his right, a cigarette in his mouth. On Nicky's left, Carter moaned and tossed restlessly. Then Nicky heard it, a soft drumming sound on the window behind him.

He sighed happily and closed his eyes. The rain had come at last. Now Ranger Meynard and his sooty-faced firefighters would have a real ally in their battle to conquer the flaming red scourge of the forest.

THE END.

OUR CAPTAIN'S JUST-A-KID!

(Continued from Page 20.)

"See those fellows?" he said. "They're tramps—what we call swagmen."

"We've seen chaps like that before," replied Des. "Shearers looking for work, aren't they?"

"They may be," mused Carey, "although they look as much like shearers as you do, and anyhow it isn't the shearing season. But it's the first time I've ever seen a swagman carrying a portable wireless set."

It was growing dark by the time they entered the desert country which lies between the Murray River and the border of South Australia and Victoria.

Tracks ran in all directions off the main road, and Mr Carey who had been through that way before, turned off along one which he claimed was a short route to Bordertown.

For about seventy miles they kept going through the darkness until the track petered out into a mere bridle path, and Carey had to pull up.

"This can't be the right way," he admitted. "To tell you the truth, I'm hanged if I quite know where we are."

He was so apologetic that no one complained.

comfortable until daylight," put in Maynard.

They lit a fire, made some tea, ate the provisions they had brought with them, then spread out their overcoats and rugs and prepared for a night in the open.

LUCKY CHARM.

AT the first crack of dawn, Des was awakened by the twittering of birds.

He walked about to shake off the stiffness caused by a night in the open. When he returned the others were stirring.

"I say," said Carey. Des covered. "There's a sort of covered cart in the scrub over there. I'm going to have a look." Des pushed through to the vehicle, the top of which he had glimpsed above the scrub. He saw that it was a wagon, with the odd name "Jimmy Chang Foo" lettered on the side.

As he drew nearer, he received a shock. Someone inside the wagon uttered a groan. Startled for a moment, he stopped abruptly, then strode forward and looked inside.

On the floor of the wagon lay

a Chinaman, apparently very ill.

"What's happened to you?" asked Des.

Jimmy Chang Foo turned his head feebly and whispered.

"Bad men. Knock on head. Take money. You help, please. Want drink water."

Des went back to the others, crashing through the scrub at the double. A draught from their water bag revived Jimmy a little, but he had been badly knocked about.

"We'll have to get him to the Bordertown Hospital, quick!" exclaimed Mr Carey. "And put the police on to the blackguards who did it."

This time Carey followed the map, and they reached Bordertown at ten o'clock. Two police officers went off to locate the missing horses, and bring in Jimmy's wagon, while the sergeant waited to get the Chinaman's story as soon as he was fit to tell it.

"All he knows is that the scoundrels had a music box with them," the policeman declared later. "A portable radio set, I suppose he means."

"I saw them," said Carey promptly. "You'll have no trouble picking them up. They'll be on the road between

Murray Bridge and Adelaide now."

As Connie and Ted reached the outskirts of Adelaide, a mobile squad car drew up beside them. Three men in plain clothes jumped out.

"Hop in," ordered their leader tersely.

Trembling, the pair scrambled in. In five minutes they were at a police station being searched.

"You're charged with robbery with violence, for a start," the senior detective stated. "We'll probably rake up a few other things as well."

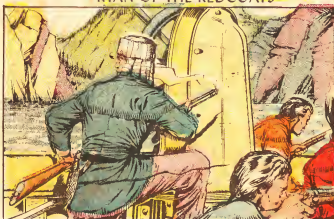
The cricketers did not leave Bordertown until late afternoon, by which time they had pronounced out of danger. He called Des to his bedside.

"You boy find me," he said, "Chinaman very thankful. You play cricket game?"

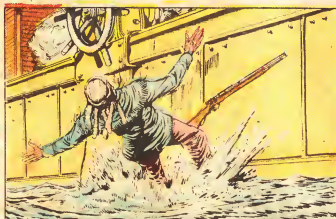
"That's right," replied Des. "Jimmy handed him a brass object like a coin, about as big as a half-crown piece."

"You takee that," he stated. "Bring good luck. You got that, you always win, savee?"

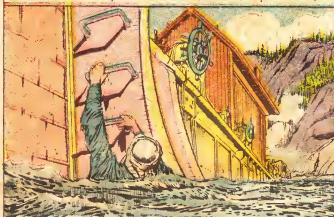
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The Chinese coin means a load of trouble for an England bowler next week!



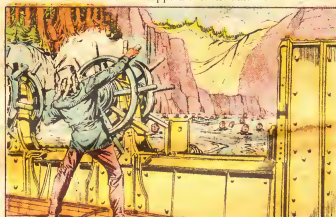
3—The other engineers in the hut began shooting and, in seconds, a full-scale battle was raging, the Indians jam-packed in the long, narrow dam-top, making easy targets for the white men. But there were two "warriors" who did not return the fire. They were Sergeant Bob Ryan and Trooper Les Fulton of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Bob had been detailed to round up Little Crow, and his latest move had been to join the rebel leader's gang. Ryan looked upstream. Hunting Bear's group was in sight!



4—The engineers inside the hut could not see the danger coming from the water, for there was no window on that side of the hut. Unless Ryan acted quickly, the white men would be caught like rats in a trap. Keeping under cover as much as possible, and firing his rifle harmlessly in the air, the Mountie sergeant watched the Red-skins swim closer. Suddenly an idea flashed into his mind. Jerking upright, he screamed and clutched his chest. Next moment, he toppled over the dam wall.



5—Les Fulton gazed horror-stricken at the spot where Bob had vanished from sight. "It's up to me now," the Mountie thought. Bob's act had convinced Little Crow's men as well, but Hunting Bear's gang saw their "dead" comrade suddenly come to life. Swimming powerfully, Ryan made for a ladder that rose from the water a few yards along the dam face. He looked over his shoulder as he grasped the ladder and began to haul himself up it. "It's going to be a close thing," Bob decided.



6—Bob gasped with the effort as he struggled upwards. His brief plunge in the water had still lasted long enough to soak both his Mountie uniform and his Chewaka disguise, and the weight of the sodden clothing made the climb a tremendous strain. At last, he hauled himself on to the dam, and started turning the nearest winch wheel. The engineers' hut was now between him and Little Crow's men. He had used the same ladder that Hunting Bear and his braves were swimming towards.



7—There was no time to lose. Hunting Bear and his warriors were very close now, and swimming hard for the ladder. Ducking to avoid the stray bullets that buzzed around like humming bees, Bob heaved at the heavy wheel which really needed two men to turn it. Ryan panted with the effort as he hauled the wheel round and he gradually became aware of a dull booming noise that was steadily increasing to a mighty roar. The winch wheels operated the winding mechanism of the dam's massive sluice gates. Now,

one of the centre gates was fully open and thousands of gallons of water were gushing out in a cascade which thundered down on to the old river bed below. The swimming Chewakas soon realised what was to be their fate and they screamed with terror as they tried to swim to either side of the gaping hole in the dam's wall. Few succeeded. The rest were swept through the wide-open sluice gate and went plummeting into the river below. With one blow, Ryan had halved the Chewaka attack.

Ryan has won the first round—but Little Crow isn't beaten yet!